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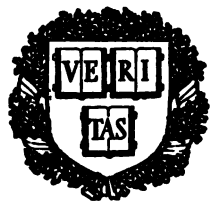

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BY D'ISRAELI,

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A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

VOL. I

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PREFACE.

THESE two volumes comprise my writings on subjects chiefly of our vernacular literature. Now, collected together, they offer an unity of design, and afford to the general reader and to the student of classical antiquity some initiation into our national Literature. It is presumed also, that they present materials for thinking not solely on literary topics; authors and books are not alone here treated of,—a comprehensive view of human nature necessarily enters into the subject from the diversity of the characters portrayed, through the gradations of their faculties, the influence of their tastes, and those incidents of their lives prompted by their fortunes or their passions. These present volumes, with their brother "CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE" now constitute a body of reading which may awaken knowledge in minds only seeking amusement, and refresh the deeper studies of the learned by matters not unworthy of their curiosity.

The titles of CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS and QUARRELS OF AUTHORS do not wholly designate the works, which include a considerable portion of literary history.

The LITERARY CHARACTER has been an old favourite with many of my contemporaries departed or now living, who have found it respond to their own emotions.

THE INQUIRY INTO THE LITERARY AND POLITICAL CHARACTER OF JAMES THE FIRST has surely corrected some general misconceptions, and thrown light on some obscure points in the history of that anomalous personage. It is a satisfaction to me to observe, since the publication of this tract, that while some competent judges have considered the "evidence irresistible," a material change has occurred in the tone of most writers. The subject presented an occasion to exhibit a minute picture of that age of transition in our national history.

THE MISCELLANIES are literary amenities, should they be found to deserve the title, constructed on that principle early adopted by me, of interspersing facts with speculation.

Public favour has encouraged the republication of these various works, which often referred to have long been difficult to procure. It has been deferred from time to time with the intention of giving the subjects a more enlarged investigation; but I have delayed the task till it cannot be performed. One of the Calamities of Authors falls to my lot, the delicate organ of vision with me has suffered a singular disorder [1],—a disorder which no oculist by his touch can heal, and no physician by his experience can expound; so much remains concerning the frame of man unrevealed to man!

In the midst of my library I am as it were distant from it. My unfinished labours, frustrated designs, remain paralysed. In a joyous beat I wander no longer through the wide circuit before me. The "strucken deer" has the sad privilege to weep when he lies down, perhaps no more to course amid those far-distant woods where once he sought to range.

Although thus compelled to refrain in a great measure from all mental labour, and incapacitated from the use of the pen and the book, these works notwithstanding have received many important corrections, having been read over to me with critical precision.

Amid this partial darkness I am not left without a distant hope, nor a present consolation; and to HER who has so often lent to me the light of her eyes, the intelligence of her voice, and the careful work of her hand, the author must ever owe "the debt immense" of paternal gratitude.

London, May 1840.

[1] I record my literary calamity as a warning to my sedentary brothers. When my eyes dwell on any object, or whenever they are closed, there appear on a bluish film, a number of mathematical squares, which are the reflection of the fine net-work of the retina, succeeded by blotches which subside into printed characters, apparently forming distinct words, arranged in straight lines as in a printed book; the monosyllables are often legible. This is the process of a few seconds. It is remarkable that the usual power of the eye is not injured or diminished for distant objects, while those near are clouded over.

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CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS:

INCLUDING

SOME INQUIRIES RESPECTING THEIR MORAL

AND LITERARY CHARACTERS.

"Such a superiority do the pursuits of Literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions."—HUME.

PREFACE.

The Calamities of Authors have often excited the attention of the lovers of literature; and, from the revival of letters to this day, this class of the community, the most ingenious and the most enlightened, have, in all the nations of Europe, been the most honoured, and the least remunerated. Pierius Valerianus, an attendant in the literary court of Leo X., who twice refused a bishopric that he might pursue his studies uninterrupted, was a friend of Authors, and composed a small work, "De Infelicitate Literatorum," which has been frequently reprinted[1]. It forms a catalogue of several Italian literati, his contemporaries; a meagre performance, in which the author shows sometimes a predilection for the marvellous, which happens so rarely in human affairs; and he is so unphilosophical, that he places among the misfortunes of literary men, those fatal casualties to which all men are alike liable. Yet even this small volume has its value; for although the historian confines his narrative to his own times, he includes a sufficient number of names to convince us that to devote our life to authorship is not the true means of improving our happiness or our fortune.

At a later period, a congenial work was composed by Theophilus Spizelius, a German divine; his four volumes are after the fashion of his country and his times, which could make even small things ponderous. In 1680 he first published two volumes, entitled "Infelix Literatus," and five years afterwards his "Felicissimus Literatus;" he writes without size, and sermonises without end, and seems to have been so grave a lover of symmetry, that he shapes his *Felicities* just with the same measure as his *Infelicities*. These two equalised bundles of hay might have held in suspense the casuistical ass of Sterne, till he had died from want of a motive to choose either. Yet Spizelius is not to be contemned because he is verbose and heavy; he has reflected more deeply than Valerianus, by opening the moral causes of those calamities which he describes[2].

The chief object of the present work is to ascertain some doubtful yet important points concerning Authors. The title of Author still retains its seduction among our youth, and is consecrated by

[1] A modern writer observes, that "Valeriano is chiefly known to the present times by his brief but curious and interesting work, *De Literatorum Infelicitate*, which has perserved many anecdotes of the principal scholars of the age not elsewhere to be found."—Roscoe's *Leo X.* vol. iv. p. 175.

[2] There is also a bulky collection of this kind, entitled, *Analecta de Calamitate Literatorum*, edited by Mencken, the author of *Charlataneria Eruditorum*.

ages. Yet what affectionate parent would consent to see his son devote himself to his pen as a profession? The studies of a true Author insulate him in society, exacting daily labours; yet he will receive but little encouragement, and less remuneration. It will be found that the most successful Author can obtain no equivalent for the labours of his life. I have endeavoured to ascertain this fact, to develop the causes and to paint the variety of evils that naturally result from the disappointments of genius. Authors themselves never discover this melancholy truth, till they have yielded to an impulse, and adopted a profession, too late in life to resist the one, or abandon the other. Whoever labours without hope, a painful state to which Authors are at length reduced, may surely be placed among the most injured class in the community. Most authors close their lives in apathy or despair, and too many live by means which few of them would not blush to describe.

Besides this perpetual struggle with penury, there are also moral causes which influence the literary character. I have drawn the individual characters and feelings of authors from their own confessions, or deduced them from the prevalent events of their lives; and often discovered them in their secret history, as it floats on tradition, or lies concealed in authentic and original documents. I would paint what has not been unhappily called the *psychological* character[1].

I have limited my inquiries to our own country, and generally to recent times; for researches more curious, and eras more distant, would less forcibly act on our sympathy. If, in attempting to avoid the naked brevity of Valerianus, I have taken a more comprehensive view of several of our authors, it has been with the hope that I was throwing a new light on their characters, or contributing some fresh materials to our literary history. I feel anxious for the fate of the opinions and the feelings which have arisen in the progress and diversity of this work; but whatever their errors may be, it is to them that my readers at least owe the materials of which it is formed; these materials will be received with consideration, as the confessions and statements of genius itself. In mixing them with my own feelings, let me apply a beautiful apologue of the Hebrews—"The clusters of grapes sent out of Babylon, implore favour for the exuberant leaves of the vine; for had there been no leaves, you had lost the grapes."

[1] From the Grecian *Psyche*, or the soul, the Germans have borrowed this expressive term. They have a *Psychological Magazine*. Some of our own recent authors have adopted the term peculiarly adapted to the historian of the human mind.

THE CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS.

AUTHORS BY PROFESSION.

GUTHRIE AND AMHURST—DRAKE—SMOLLETT.

A GREAT author once surprised me by inquiring what I meant by "an Author by Profession." He seemed offended at the supposition that I was creating an odious distinction between authors, I was only placing it among their calamities.

The title of AUTHOR is venerable; and in the ranks of national glory, authors mingle with its heroes and its patriots. It is indeed by our authors that foreigners have been taught most to esteem us: and this remarkably appears in the expression of Gemelli, the Italian traveller round the world, who wrote about the year 1700; for he told all Europe that "he could find nothing amongst us but our writings to distinguish us from the worst of barbarians." But to become an "Author by Profession," is to have no other means of subsistence, than such as are extracted from the quill; and no one believes these to be so precarious as they really are, until disappointed, distressed, and thrown out of every pursuit which can maintain independence, the noblest mind is cast into the lot of a doomed labourer.

Literature abounds with instances of "Authors by Profession" accommodating themselves to this condition. By vile artifices of faction and popularity their moral sense is injured, and the literary character sits in that study which he ought to dignify, merely, as one of them sings,

> "To keep his mutton twirling at the fire."

Another has said, "He is a fool who is a grain honester than the times he lives in."

Let it not, therefore, be conceived that I mean to degrade or vilify the literary character, when I would only separate the Author from those pollutors of the press, who have turned a vestal into a prostitute; a grotesque race of famished buffoons or laughing assassins; or that populace of unhappy beings, who

are driven to perish in their garrets, unknown and unregarded by all, for illusions which even their calamities cannot disperse. Poverty, said an ancient, is a sacred thing—it is, indeed, so sacred, that it creates a sympathy even for those who have incurred it by their folly, or plead by it for their crimes.

The history of our Literature is instructive—let us trace the origin of characters of this sort among us: some of them have happily disappeared, and, whenever great authors obtain their due rights, the calamities of literature will be greatly diminished.

As for the phrase of "Authors by Profession," it is said to be of modern origin; and GUTHRIE, a great dealer in literature, and a political scribe, is thought to have introduced it, as descriptive of a class of writers which he wished to distinguish from the general term. I present the reader with an unpublished letter of Guthrie, in which the phrase will not only be found, but, what is more important, which exhibits the character in its degraded form. It was addressed to a minister.

June 3, 1762.

My Lord,

"In the year 1745-6, Mr. Pelham, then first Lord of the Treasury, acquainted me, that it was his Majesty's pleasure I should receive, till better provided for, which never has happened, 200*l.* a-year, to be paid by him and his successors in the Treasury. I was satisfied with the august name made use of, and the appointment has been regularly and quarterly paid me ever since. I have been equally punctual in doing the government all the services that fell within my abilities or sphere of life, especially in those critical situations that call for unanimity in the service of the crown.

"Your Lordship may possibly now suspect that *I am an Author by Profession:* you are not deceived; and will be less so, if you believe that I am disposed to serve his Majesty under your Lordship's *future patronage and protection, with greater zeal if possible than ever.*

"I have the honour to be,
"My Lord, etc.
"WILLIAM GUTHRIE."

Unblushing venality! In one part he shouts like a plundering hussar who has carried off his prey; and in the other he bows with the tame suppleness of the "quarterly" Swiss chaffering his halbert for his price;—"to serve his Majesty" for—"his Lordship's future patronage."

Guthrie's notion of "An Author by Profession," entirely derived from his own character, was two-fold; literary task-work, and political degradation. He was to be a gentleman convertible into an historian, at——per sheet; and, when he had not time to write histories, he chose to sell his name to those he never wrote.—These are mysteries of the craft of authorship; in this sense it is only a trade, and a very bad one! But when in his other capacity, this gentleman comes to hire himself to one lord as he had to another, no one can doubt that the stipendiary would change his principles with his livery [1].

Such have been some of the "Authors by Profession" who have worn the literary mask; for literature was not the first object of their designs. They form a race peculiar to our country. They opened their career in our first great revolution, and flourished during the eventful period of the civil wars. In the form of newspapers, their "Mercuries" and "Diurnals" were political pamphlets [2]. Of these, the royalists, being the better educated, carried off to their side all the spirit, and only left the foam and dregs for the parliamentarians; otherwise, in lying, they were just like one another; for "the father of lies" seems to be of no party! Were it desirable to instruct men by a system of political and moral calumny, the complete art might be drawn from these archives of political lying, during their flourishing era. We might discover principles among them which would have humbled the genius of Machiavel himself, and even have taught Mr. Sheridan's more popular scribe, Mr. Puff, a sense of his own inferiority.

It is known that, during the administration of Harley and Walpole, this class of authors swarmed and started up like mustard-seed in a hot-bed. More than fifty thousand pounds were expended among them! Faction, with mad and blind passions, can affix a value on the basest things that serve its purpose [3]. These "Authors by Profession" wrote more assiduously the better they were paid; but as attacks only produced replies and rejoinders, to remunerate them was heightening the fever and feeding the disease. They were all fighting for present pay, with a view of the promised land before them; but they at length became so numerous, and so crouded on one another, that the

[1] It has been lately disclosed that Home the author of "Douglas," was pensioned by Lord Bute to answer all the papers and pamphlets of the government, and to be a vigilant defender of the measures of government.

[2] I have elsewhere portrayed the personal characters of the hireling chiefs of these paper wars: the versatile and unprincipled Marchmont Needham, the Cobbett of his day; the factious Sir Roger d'Estrange; and the bantering and profligate Sir John Birkenhead.

[3] An ample view of these lucubrations is exhibited in the early volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine.

minister could neither satisfy promised claims nor actual dues. He had not at last the humblest office to bestow, not a commissionership of wine licences, as Tacitus Gordon had : not even a collectorship of the customs in some obscure town, as was the wretched worn-out Oldmixon's pittance [1]; not a crumb for a mouse!

The captain of this banditti in the administration of Walpole was Arnall, a young attorney, whose mature genius for scurrilous party-papers broke forth in his tender nonage. This hireling was "The Free Briton," and in "The Gazetteer" *Francis Walsingham, Esq.*, abusing the name of a profound statesman. It is said, that he received above ten thousand pounds for his obscure labours; and this patriot was suffered to retire with all the dignity which a pension could confer. He not only wrote for hire, but valued himself on it; proud of the pliancy of his pen and of his principles, he wrote without remorse what his patron was forced to pay for, but to disavow. It was from a knowledge of these "Authors by Profession," writers of a faction in the name of the community, as they have been well described, that our great statesman Pitt fell into an error which he lived to regret. He did not distinguish between authors; he confounded the mercenary with the men of talent and character; and with this contracted view of the political influence of genius, he must have viewed with awe, perhaps with surprise, its mighty labour in the volumes of Burke.

But these "Authors by Profession" sometimes found a retribution of their crimes even from their masters. When the ardent patron was changed into a cold minister, their pen seemed wonderfully to have lost its point, and the feather could not any more tickle. They were flung off, as Shakespeare's striking imagery expresses it, like

> "An unregarded bulrush on the stream,
> To rot itself with motion."

Look on the fate and fortune of AMHURST. The life of this

[1] It was said of this man that "he had submitted to labour at the press, like a horse in a mill, till he became as blind and as wretched." To show the extent of the conscience of this class of writers, and to what lengths mere party-writers can proceed, when duly encouraged, Oldmixon, who was a Whig historian, if a violent party-writer ought ever to be dignified by so venerable a title, unmercifully rigid to all other historians, was himself guilty of the crimes with which he so loudly accused others. He charged three eminent persons with interpolating Lord Clarendon's History; this charge was afterwards disproved by the passages being produced in his Lordship's own hand-writing, which had been fortunately preserved; and yet this accuser of interpolation, when employed by Bishop Kennett to publish his collection of our historians, made no scruple of falsifying numerous passages in Daniel's Chronicle, which makes the first edition of that collection of no value.

"Author by Profession" points a moral. He flourished about the year 1730. He passed through a youth of iniquity, and was expelled his college for his irregularities: he had exhibited no marks of regeneration when he assailed the university with the periodical paper of the *Terræ Filius*; a witty Saturnalian effusion on the manners and toryism of Oxford, where the portraits have an extravagant kind of likeness, and are so false and so true that they were universally relished and individually understood. Amhurst, having lost his character, hastened to reform the morals and politics of the nation. For near twenty years he toiled at "The Craftsman," of which ten thousand are said to have been sold in one day. Admire this patriot! an expelled collegian becomes an outrageous zealot for popular reform, and an intrepid Whig can bend to be yoked to all the drudgery of a faction! Amhurst succeeded in writing out the minister, and writing in Bolingbroke and Pulteney. Now came the hour of gratitude and generosity! His patrons mounted into power—but—they silently dropped the instrument of their ascension. The political prostitute stood shivering at the gate of preferment, which his masters had for ever flung against him. He died broken-hearted, and owed the charity of a grave to his bookseller.

I must add one more striking example, of a political author, in the case of Dr. JAMES DRAKE; a man of genius, and an excellent writer. He resigned an honourable profession, that of medicine, to adopt a very contrary one, that of becoming an author by profession for a party. As a tory writer, he dared every extremity of the law, while he evaded it by every subtlety of artifice; he sent a masked lady with his MS. to the printer, who was never discovered; and was once saved by a flaw in the indictment from the simple change of an *r* for a *t*, or *nor* for *not*; one of those shameful evasions, by which the law, to its perpetual disgrace, so often protects the criminal from punishment. Dr. Drake had the honour of hearing himself censured from the throne; of being imprisoned; of seeing his "Memorials of the Church of England" burned at London, and his "Historia Anglo-Scotica" at Edinburgh. Having enlisted himself in the pay of the booksellers, among other works, I suspect, he condescended to practice some literary impositions. For he has reprinted Father Parsons's famous libel against the Earl of Leicester in Elizabeth's reign, under the title of "Secret Memoirs of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1706," 8vo, with a preface pretending it was printed from an old MS.

Drake was a lover of literature; he left behind him a version of Herodotus, and a "System of Anatomy," once the most popular and curious of its kind. After all this turmoil of his

literary life, neither his masked lady nor the flaws in his indictments availed him.—Government brought a writ of error, severely prosecuted him; and, abandoned, as usual, by those for whom he had annihilated a genius which deserved a better fate, his perturbed spirit broke out into a fever, and he died raving against cruel prosecutors, and patrons not much more humane.

So much for some of those who have been "Authors by Profession" in one of the two-fold capacities which Guthrie designed, that of writing for a minister; the other, that of writing for the bookseller, though far more honourable, is sufficiently calamitous.

In commercial times, the hope of profit is always a stimulating, but a degrading motive; it dims the clearest intellect, it stills the proudest feelings. Habit and prejudice will soon reconcile even genius to the work of money, and to avow the motive without a blush. "An author by profession," at once ingenious and ingenuous, declared that, "till fame appears to be worth more than money, he would always prefer money to fame." JOHNSON had a notion that there existed no motive for writing, but money! Yet, crowned heads have sighed with the ambition of authorship, though this great master of the human mind could suppose that on this subject men were not actuated either by the love of glory or of pleasure! FIELDING, an author of great genius and of "the profession" in one of his Covent-garden Journals asserts, that "An author, in a country where there is no public provision for men of genius, is not obliged to be a more disinterested patriot than any other. Why is he whose *livelihood is in his pen*, a greater monster in using it to serve himself, than he who uses his tongue for the same purpose?"

But it is a very important question to ask, Is this "livelihood in the pen" really such? Authors drudging on in obscurity, and enduring miseries which can never close but with their life —shall this be worth even the humble designation of a "livelihood?" I am not now combating with them whether their task-work degrades them, but whether they are receiving an equivalent for the violation of their genius, for the weight of the fetters they are wearing, and for the entailed miseries which form an author's sole legacies to his widow and his children. Far from me is the wish to degrade literature by the inquiry; but it will be useful to many a youth of promising talent, who is impatient to abandon all professions for this one, to consider well the calamities in which he will most probably participate.

Among "Authors by Profession"—who has displayed a more fruitful genius, and exercised more intense industry, with

a loftier sense of his independence, than SMOLLETT? But look into his life and enter into his feelings, and you will be shocked at the disparity of his situation with the genius of the man. His life was a succession of struggles, vexations, and disappointments, yet of success in his writings. Smollett, who is a great poet, though he has written little in verse, and whose rich genius composed the most original pictures of human life, was compelled by his wants to debase his name by selling it to voyages and translations, which he never could have read. When he had worn himself down in the service of the public, or the booksellers, there remained not, of all his slender remunerations, in the last stage of life, sufficient to convey him to a cheap country and a restorative air on the Continent. The father may have thought himself fortunate, that the daughter whom he loved with more than common affection was no more to share in his wants; but the husband had by his side the faithful companion of his life, left without a wreck of fortune. Smollett, gradually perishing in a foreign land, neglected by an admiring public, and without fresh resources from the booksellers, who were receiving the income of his works—threw out his injured feelings in the character of *Bramble;* the warm generosity of his temper, but not his genius, seemed fleeting with his breath. In a foreign land his widow marked by a plain monument the spot of his burial, and she perished in solitude! Yet Smollett dead—soon an ornamented column is raised at the place of his birth, while the grave of the author seemed to multiply the editions of his works. There are indeed grateful feelings in the public at large for a favourite author; but the awful testimony of those feelings, by its gradual progress, must appear beyond the grave! They visit the column consecrated by his name, and his features are most loved, most venerated, in the bust.

Smollett himself shall be the historian of his own heart; this most successful "Author by Profession," who, for his subsistence, composed master-works of genius, and drudged in the toils of slavery, shall himself tell us what happened, and describe that state between life and death, partaking of both, which obscured his faculties, and sickened his lofty spirit.

"Had some of those who were pleased to call themselves my friends been at any pains to deserve the character, and told me ingenuously what I had to expect in *the capacity of an author, when I first professed myself of that venerable fraternity,* I should in all probability have spared myself the *incredible labour and chagrin I have since undergone.*"

As a relief from literary labour, Smollett once went to revisit his family, and to embrace the mother he loved; but such

was the irritation of his mind and the infirmity of his health, exhausted by the hard labours of authorship, that he never passed a more weary summer, nor ever found himself so incapable of indulging the warmest emotions of his heart. On his return, in a letter, he gave this melancholy narrative of himself:—"Between friends, I am now convinced that *my brain was in some measure affected*; for I had a kind of *Coma Vigil* upon me from April to November, without intermission. In consideration of this circumstance, I know you will forgive all my peevishness and discontent; tell Mrs. Moore that with regard to me, she has as yet seen nothing but the wrong side of the tapestry." Thus it happens in the life of authors, that they whose comic genius diffuses cheerfulness, create a pleasure which they cannot themselves participate.

The *Coma Vigil* may be described by a verse of Shakespeare:—

> "Still-waking sleep! that is not what it is!"

Of praise and censure, says Smollett in a letter to Dr. Moore, "Indeed I am sick of both, and wish to God my circumstances, would allow me to consign my pen to oblivion." A wish, as fervently repeated by many "Authors by Profession," who are not so fully entitled as was Smollett to write when he chose, or to have lived in quiet for what he had written. An author's life is therefore too often deprived of all social comfort, whether he be the writer for a minister, or a bookseller—but their case requires to be stated.

THE CASE OF AUTHORS STATED,

INCLUDING THE HISTORY OF LITERARY PROPERTY.

JOHNSON has dignified the booksellers as "the patrons of literature," which was generous in that great author, who had written well and lived but ill all his life on that patronage. Eminent booksellers, in their constant intercourse with the most enlightened class of the community, that is, with the best authors and the best readers, partake of the intelligence around them; their great capitals, too, are productive of good and evil in literature; useful when they carry on great works, and pernicious when they sanction indifferent ones. Yet are they but commercial men. A trader can never be deemed a patron, for it would be romantic to purchase what is not saleable; and where no favour is conferred, there is no patronage.

Authors continue poor, and booksellers become opulent; an extraordinary result! Booksellers are not agents for authors, but proprietors of their works; so that the perpetual revenues of literature are solely in the possession of the trade.

Is it then wonderful that even successful authors are indigent? They are heirs to fortunes, but by a strange singularity they are disinherited at their birth; for, on the publication of their works, these cease to be their own property. Let that natural property be secured, and a good book would be an inheritance, a leasehold or a freehold, as you choose it; it might at least last out a generation, and descend to the author's blood, were they permitted to live on their father's glory, as in all other property they do on his industry[1]. Something of this nature has been instituted in France, where the descendants of Corneille and Molière retain a claim on the theatres whenever the dramas of their great ancestors are performed. In that country, literature has ever received peculiar honours—it was there decreed, in the affair of Cribillon, that literary productions are not seizable by creditors[2].

The history of literary property in this country might form as ludicrous a narrative as Lucian's "true history." It was a long while doubtful whether any such thing existed, at the very time when booksellers were assigning over the perpetual copyrights of books, and making them the subject of family settlements for the provision of their wives and children! When Tonson in 1739 obtained an injunction to restrain another bookseller from

[1] The following facts will show the value of *literary property;* immense profits and cheap purchases! The manuscript of "Robinson Crusoe" ran through the whole trade, and no one would print it; the bookseller who did purchase it, who it is said was not remarkable for his discernment, but for a speculative turn, got a thousand guineas by it. How many have the booksellers since accumulated? Burn's "Justice" was disposed of by its author for a trifle, as well as Buchan's "Domestic Medicine;" these works yield annual incomes. Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield" was sold in the hour of distress, with little distinction from any other work in that class of composition; and "Evelina" produced five guineas from the niggardly trader. Dr. Johnson fixed the price of his "Biography of the Poets" at two hundred guineas; and Mr. Malone observes, the booksellers in the course of twenty-five years have probably got five thousand. I could add a great number of facts of this nature which relate to living writers; the profits of their own works for two or three years would rescue them from the horrors and humiliation of pauperism. It is, perhaps, useful to record, that, while the compositions of genius are but slightly remunerated, though sometimes as productive as "the household stuff" of literature, the latter is rewarded with princely magnificence. At the sale of the Robinsons, the copy-right of "Vyse's Spelling-book" was sold at the enormous price of 2200*l.*, with an *annuity* of fifty guineas to the author!

[2] The circumstance, with the poet's dignified petition, and the King's honourable decree, are preserved in "Curiosities of Literature," p. 147, 11th edition, 1839.

printing Milton's Paradise Lost, he brought into court as a proof of his title an assignment of the original copyright, made over by the sublime poet in 1667, which was read. Milton received for this assignment the sum which we all know—Tonson and all his family and assignees rode in their carriages with the profits of the five-pound epic[1].

The verbal and tasteless lawyers, not many years past, with legal metaphysics, wrangled like the schoolmen, inquiring of each other, "whether the *style* and *ideas* of an author were tangible things; or if these were a *property*, how is *possession* to be taken, or any act of *occupancy* made on mere intellectual *ideas*." Nothing, said they, can be an object of property, but which has a corporeal substance; the air and the light, to which they compared an author's ideas, are common to all; ideas in the MS. state were compared to birds in a cage; while the author confines them in his own dominion, none but he has a right to let them fly; but the moment he allows the bird to escape from his hand, it is no violation of property in any one to make it his own. And to prove that there existed no property after publication, they found an analogy in the gathering of acorns, or in seizing on a vacant piece of ground; and thus degrading that most refined piece of art formed in the highest state of society, a literary production, they brought us back to a state of nature; and seem to have concluded that literary property was purely ideal; a phantom which as its author could neither grasp nor confine to himself, he must entirely depend on the public benevolence for his reward[2].

The Ideas, that is, the work of an author, are "tangible

[1] The elder Tonson's portrait represents him in his gown and cap, holding in his right hand a volume lettered "Paradise Lost"—such a favourite object was Milton and copyright! Jacob Tonson was the founder of a race who long honoured literature. His rise in life is curious. He was at first unable to pay twenty pounds for a play by Dryden, and joined with another bookseller to advance that sum; the play sold, and Tonson was afterwards enabled to purchase the succeeding ones. He and his nephew died worth two hundred thousand pounds.—Much old Tonson owed to his own industry; but he was a mere trader. He and Dryden had frequent bickerings; he insisted on receiving 10,000 verses for two hundred and sixty-eight pounds, and poor Dryden threw in the finest Ode in the language towards the number. He would pay in the base coin which was then current; which was a loss to the poet. Tonson once complained to Dryden, that he had only received 1446 lines of his translation of Ovid for his Miscellany for fifty guineas, when he had calculated at the rate of 1518 lines for forty guineas; he gives the poet a piece of critical reasoning, that he considered he had a better bargain with "Juvenal," which is reckoned "not so easy to translate as Ovid." In these times such a mere trader in literature has disappeared.

[2] Sir James Burrows' Reports on the question concerning Literary Property, 4to. London, 1773.

things." "There are works," to quote the words of a near and dear relative, "which require great learning, great industry, great labour, and great capital, in their preparation. They assume a palpable form. You may fill warehouses with them, and freight ships; and the tenure by which they are held is superior to that of all other property, for it is original. It is tenure which does not exist in a doubtful title; which does not spring from any adventitious circumstances;—it is not found—it is not purchased—it is not prescriptive — it is original; so it is the most natural of all titles, because it is the most simple and least artificial. It is paramount and sovereign, because it is a tenure by creation[1]."

There were indeed some more generous spirits and better philosophers fortunately found on the same bench; and the identity of a literary composition was resolved into its sentiments and language, besides what was more obviously valuable to some persons, the print and paper. On this slight principle was issued the profound award which accorded a certain term of years to any work, however immortal. They could not diminish the immortality of a book, but only its reward. In all the litigations respecting literary property, authors were little considered—except some honourable testimonies due to genius, from the sense of WILLES, and the eloquence of MANSFIELD. Literary property was still disputed, like the rights of a parish common. An honest printer, who could not always write grammar, had the shrewdness to make a bold effort in this scramble, and perceiving that even by this last favourable award all literary property would necessarily centre with the booksellers, now stood forward for his own body, the printers. This rough advocate observed, that "a few persons, who call themselves *booksellers*, about the number of *twenty-five*, have kept the *monopoly of books and copies* in their hands, to the entire exclusion of all others; but more especially the *printers*, whom they have always held it a rule never to let become purchasers in *copy*." Not a word for the *authors*! As for them, they were doomed by both parties as the fat oblation: they indeed sent forth some meek bleatings; but what were AUTHORS, between judges, booksellers, and printers? the sacrificed among the sacrificers!

All this was reasoning in a circle. LITERARY PROPERTY in our nation arose from a *new state of society*.—These lawyers could never develop its nature by wild analogies, nor discover it in any common-law right; for our common law, composed of immemorial customs, could never have had in its contemplation an object which could not have existed in barbarous periods.

[1] Mirror of Parliament, 3529.

Literature, in its enlarged spirit, certainly never entered into the thoughts or attention of our rude ancestors. All their views were bounded by the necessaries of life; and as yet they had no conception of the impalpable, invisible, yet sovereign dominion of the human mind—enough for our rough heroes was that of the seas! Before the reign of Henry VIII. great authors composed occasionally a book in Latin, which none but other great authors cared for, and which the people could not read. In the reign of Elizabeth, ROGER ASCHAM appeared; one of those men of genius born to create a new era in the history of their nation. The first English author who may be regarded as the founder of our *prose style* was Roger Ascham, the venerable parent of our *native literature*. At a time when our scholars affected to contemn the vernacular idiom, and in their Latin works were losing their better fame, that of being understood by all their countrymen, Ascham boldly avowed the design of setting an example, in his own words, TO SPEAK AS THE COMMON PEOPLE, TO THINK AS WISE MEN. His pristine English is still forcible without pedantry, and still beautiful without ornament. The illustrious BACON condescended to follow this new example, in the most popular of his works. This change in our literature was like a revelation; these men taught us our language in books. We became a reading people; and then the demand for books naturally produced a new order of authors, who traded in literature. It was then, so early as in the Elizabethan age, that *literary property* may be said to derive its obscure origin in this nation. It was protected in an indirect manner by the *licensers* of the press; for although that was a mere political institution, only designed to prevent seditious and irreligious publications, yet, as no book could be printed without a licence, there was honour enough in the licensers not to allow other publishers to infringe on the privilege granted to the first claimant.—In Queen Anne's time, when the office of licensers was extinguished, a more liberal genius was rising in the nation, and *literary property* received a more definite and a more powerful protection. A limited term was granted to every author to reap the fruits of his labours; and Lord Hardwicke pronounced this statute "a universal patent for authors." Yet subsequently, the subject of *literary property* involved discussion; even at so late a period as in 1769, it was still to be litigated. It was then granted that originally an author had at common law a property in his work, but that the act of Anne took away all copyright after the expiration of the terms it permitted.

As the matter now stands, let us address an arithmetical age —but my pen hesitates to bring down my subject to an argument fitted to "these coster-monger times [1]." On the present prin-

[1] Coster-monger, or Costard-monger, is a dealer in apples, which are so called

ciple of literary property, it results that an author disposes of a leasehold property of twenty-eight years, often for less than the price of one year's purchase! How many living authors are the sad witnesses of this fact, who, like so many Esaus, have sold their inheritance for a meal! I leave the whole school of Adam Smith to calm their calculating emotions concerning "that unprosperous race of men" (sometimes this master-seer calls them "unproductive") "commonly called *men of letters*" who are pretty much in the situation which lawyers and physicians would be in, were these, as he tells us, in that state when "*a scholar* and *a beggar* seem to have been very nearly *synonymous terms*"—and this melancholy fact that man of genius discovered, without the feather of his pen brushing away a tear from his lid—without one spontaneous and indignant groan!

Authors may exclaim, "we ask for justice, not charity." They would not need to require any favour, nor claim any other than that protection which an enlightened government, in its wisdom and its justice, must bestow. They would leave to the public disposition the sole appreciation of their works; their book must make its own fortune; a bad work may be cried up, and a good work may be cried down; but Faction will soon lose its voice, and Truth acquire one. The cause we are pleading is not the calamities of indifferent writers; but of those whose utility, or whose genius, long survives that limited term which has been so hardly wrenched from the penurious hand of verbal lawyers. Every lover of literature, and every votary of humanity, has long felt indignant at that sordid state and all those secret sorrows to which men of the finest genius, or of sublime industry, are reduced and degraded in society. Johnson himself, who rejected that perpetuity of literary property, which some enthusiasts seemed to claim at the time the subject was undergoing the discussion of the judges, is however for extending the copyright to a *century*. Could authors secure this their natural right, literature would acquire a permanent and a nobler reward; for great authors would then be distinguished by the very profits they would receive, from that obscure multitude, whose common disgraces they frequently participate, notwithstanding the superiority of their own genius. Johnson himself will serve as a proof of the incompetent remuneration of literary property. He undertook and he performed an Herculean labour, which employed him so many years that the price he obtained was exhausted before the work was concluded:—the wages did not

because they are shaped like a *costard, i. e.* a man's head. *Steevens*.—Johnson explains the phrase eloquently: "In these times when the prevalence of trade has produced that meanness, that rates the merit of everything by money."

even last as long as the labour! Where then is the author to look forward, when such works are undertaken, for a provision for his family, or for his future existence? It would naturally arise from the work itself, were authors not the most ill-treated and oppressed class of the community. The daughter of MILTON need not have craved the alms of the admirers of her father, if the right of authors had been better protected; his own Paradise Lost had then been her better portion, and her most honourable inheritance. The children of BURNS would have required no subscriptions; that annual tribute which the public pay to the genius of their parent was their due, and would have been their fortune.

Authors now submit to have a shorter life than their own celebrity. While the book markets of Europe are supplied with the writings of English authors, and they have a wider diffusion in America than at home, it seems a national ingratitude to limit the existence of works for their authors to a short number of years, and then to seize on their possession for ever.

THE SUFFERINGS OF AUTHORS.

THE *natural rights and properties of* AUTHORS not having been sufficiently protected, they are defrauded, not indeed of their fame, though they may not always live to witness it, but of their *uninterrupted profits,* which might save them from their frequent degradation in society. That act of Anne which confers on them some right of property, acknowledges that works of learned men have been carried on "too often to the ruin of them and their families."

Hence we trace a literary calamity which the public endure in those "Authors by Profession," who, finding often too late in life that it is the worst profession, are not scrupulous to live by some means or other. "I must live," cried one of the brotherhood, shrugging his shoulders in his misery, and almost blushing for a libel he had just printed—"I do not see the necessity," was the dignified reply. Trade was certainly not the origin of authorship. Most of our great authors have written from a more impetuous impulse than that of a mechanic; urged by a loftier motive than that of humouring the popular taste, they have not lowered themselves by writing down to the public, but have raised the public to them. Untasked, they composed at propitious intervals; and feeling, not labour, was in their last, as in their first page.

When we became a reading people, books were to be suited to popular tastes, and then that trade was opened that leads to the workhouse. A new race sprang up, that, like Ascham, "spoke as the common people;" but would not, like Ascham, "think as wise men." The founders of "Authors by Profession" appear as far back as in the Elizabethan age. Then there were some roguish wits, who taking advantage of the public humour, and yielding their principle to their pen, lived to write, and wrote to live; loose livers and loose writers!—like Autolycus, they ran to the fair, with baskets of hasty manufactures, fit for clowns and maidens [1].

Even then flourished the craft of authorship, and the mysteries of book-selling. Robert GREENE, the master-wit, wrote "The Art of Coney-catching," or Cheatery, in which he was an adept; he died of a surfeit of rhenish and pickled herrings, at a fatal banquet of authors;—and left as his legacy among the 'Authors by Profession' "A groatsworth of wit, bought with a million of repentance." One died of another kind of surfeit. Another was assassinated in a brothel. But the list of the calamities of all these worthies have as great variety as those of the Seven Champions. Nor were the *stationers*, or *book-venders*, as the publishers of books were first designated, at a fault in the mysteries of "coney-catching." Deceptive and vaunting title-pages were practised to such excess, that TOM NASH, an "Author by Profession," never fastidiously modest, blushed at the title of his "Pierce Pennilesse," which the publisher had flourished in the first edition, like "a tedious mountebank." The booksellers forged great names to recommend their works, and passed off in currency their base metal stamped with a royal head. "It was an usual thing in those days," says honest Anthony Wood, "to set a great name to a book or books, by the sharking booksellers or snivelling writers, to get bread."

Such authors as these are unfortunate, before they are criminal; they often tire out their youth before they discover that "Author by Profession" is a denomination ridiculously assumed, for it is none! The first efforts of men of genius are usually honourable ones; but too often they suffer that genius to be debased. Many who would have composed history have turned voluminous party-writers; many a noble satirist has become a hungry libeller. Men who are starved in society, hold to it but loosely. They are the children of Nemesis! they avenge themselves—and with the Satan of MILTON they exclaim,

"Evil, be thou my good!"

[1] An abundance of these amusing tracts eagerly bought up in their day, but which came in the following generation to the ballad-stalls, are in the present enshrined in the cabinets of the curious. Such are the revolutions of literature!

Never were their feelings more vehemently echoed than by this Nash—the creature of genius, of famine, and despair. He lived indeed in the age of Elizabeth, but writes as if he had lived in our own. He proclaimed himself to the world as *Pierce Pennilesse*, and on a retrospect of his *literary life*, observes that he had "sat up late and rose early, contended with the cold, and conversed with scarcitie," he says, "all my labours turned to losse,—I was despised and neglected, my paines not regarded, or slightly rewarded, and I myself, in prime of my best wit, laid open to povertie. Whereupon I accused my fortune, railed on my patrons, bit my pen, rent my papers, and raged."—And then comes the after-reflection, which so frequently provokes the anger of genius: "How many base men that wanted those parts I had, enjoyed content at will, and had wealth at command! I called to mind a cobbler that was worth five hundred pounds; an hostler that had built a goodly inn; a carman in a leather pilche that had whipt a thousand pound out of his horses tail—and have I more than these? thought I to myself; am I better born? am I better brought up? yea, and better favoured! and yet am I a beggar? How am I crost, or whence is this curse? Even from hence, the men that should employ such as I am, are enamoured of their own wits, though they be never so scurvie; that a scrivener is better paid than a scholar; and men of art must seek to live among cormorants, or be kept under by dunces, who count it policy to keep them bare to follow their books the better." And then, Nash thus utters the cries of—

A DESPAIRING AUTHOR!

"Why is't damnation to despair and die
When life is my true happiness' disease?
My soul! my soul! thy safety makes me fly
The faulty means that might my pain appease;
Divines and dying men may talk of hell;
But in my heart her several torments dwell.

Ah worthless wit, to train me to this woe!
Deceitful arts that nourish discontent!
Ill thrive the folly that bewitch'd me so!
Vain thoughts, adieu! for now I will repent;
And yet my wants persuade me to proceed,
Since none take pity of a scholar's need! -

Forgive me, God, although I curse my birth,
And ban the air wherein I breathe a wretch!
For misery hath daunted all my mirth—
Without redress complains my careless verse,
And Midas' ears relent not at my moan!
In some far land will I my griefs rehearse,
'Mongst them that will be moved when I shall groan
England, adieu! the soil that brought me forth!
Adieu, unkind! where skill is nothing worth!"

Such was the miserable cry of an "Author by Profession" in the reign of Elizabeth. Nash not only renounces his country in his despair—and hesitates on "the faulty means" which have appeased the pangs of many of his unhappy brothers, but he proves also the weakness of the moral principle among these men of genius; for he promises, if any Mæcenas will bind him by his bounty, he will do him "as much honour as any poet of my beardless years in England—but," he adds, "if he be sent away with a flea in his ear, let him look that I will rail on him soundly; not for an hour or a day, while the injury is fresh in my memory, but in some elaborate polished poem, which I will leave to the world when I am dead, to be a living image to times to come of his beggarly parsimony." Poets might imagine that CHATTERTON had writen all this, about the time he struck a balance of his profit and loss by the death of Beckford the Lord Mayor, in which he concludes with "am glad he is dead by 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* '"

A MENDICANT AUTHOR,

AND THE PATRONS OF FORMER TIMES.

IT must be confessed, that before "Authors by Profession" had fallen into the hands of the booksellers, they endured peculiar-grievances. They were pitiable retainers of some great family. The miseries of such an author, and the insolence and penuriousness of his patrons, who would not return the poetry they liked and would not pay for, may be traced in the eventful life of THOMAS CHURCHYARD, a poet of the age of Elizabeth, one of those unfortunate men who have written poetry all their days, and lived a long life, to complete the misfortune. His muse was so fertile, that his works pass all enumeration. He courted numerous patrons, who valued the poetry, while they left the

' Chatterton had written a political essay for "The North Briton," which opened with the preluding flourish of "A spirited people freeing themselves from insupportable slavery:" it was however, though accepted, not printed, on account of the Lord Mayor's death. The patriot thus calculated the death of his great patron!

			l.	*s.*	*d.*
Lost by his death in this Essay			1	11	6
Gained in Elegies	2	2*l.*			
—— in Essays	3	3			
			5	5	0
Am glad he is dead by			3	13	6

poet to his own miserable contemplations. In a long catalogue of his works, which this poet has himself given, he adds a few memoranda, as he proceeds, a little ludicrous, but very melancholy. He wrote a book which he could never afterwards recover from one of his patrons, and adds, "all which book was in as good verse as ever I made; an honourable knight dwelling in the Black Friars can witness the same, because I read it unto him." Another accorded him the same remuneration—on which he adds, "An infinite number of other songs and sonnets given where they cannot be recovered, nor purchase any favour when they are craved." Still, however, he announces "twelve long tales for Christmas, dedicated to twelve honourable Lords." Well might Churchyard write his own sad life, under the title of "The tragicall Discourse of the haplesse Man's Life."

It will not be easy to parallel this pathethic description of the wretched age of a poor neglected poet mourning over a youth vainly spent.

"High time it is to haste my carcase hence:
Youth stole away and felt no kind of joy,
And age he left in travail ever since;
The wanton days that made me nice and coy
Were but a dream, a shadow, and a toy—

I look in glass, and find my cheeks so lean
That every hour I do but wish me dead:
Now back bends down, and forwards falls the head,
And hollow eyes in wrinkled brow doth shroud
As though two stars were creeping under cloud.

The lips wax cold and look both pale and thin,
The teeth falls out as nutts forsook the shell,
The bare bald head but shows where hair hath been,
The lively joints wax weary, stiff, and still,
The ready tongue now falters in his tale;
The courage quails as strength decays and goes....

The thatcher hath a cottage poor you see:
The shepherd knows where he shall sleep at night;
The daily drudge from cares can quiet be:
Thus fortune sends some rest to every wight;
And I was born to house and land by right....

Well, ere my breath my body do forsake
My spirit I bequeath to God above;
My books, my scrawls, and songs that I did make,
I leave with friends, that freely did me love....

Now, friends, shake hands, I must be gone, my boys!
Our mirth takes end, our triumph all is done;
Our tickling talk, our sports and merry toys

Do glide away like shadow of the sun.
Another comes when I my race have run,
Shall pass the time with you in better plight,
And find good cause of greater things to write."

Yet Churchyard was no contemptible bard; he composed a national poem, "The Worthiness of Wales," which has been reprinted, and will be still dear to his "Father-land," as the Hollanders expressively denote their natal spot. He wrote, in "The Mirrour of Magistrates," the life of Wolsey which has parts of great dignity; and the life of Jane Shore, which was much noticed in his day, for a severe critic of the times writes:

"Hath not Shore's wife, although a light-skirt she,
Given him a chaste, long, lasting memorie?"

Churchyard and the miseries of his poetical life are alluded to by Spenser. He is old Palemon in "Colin Clout's come home again," Spenser is supposed to describe this laborious writer for half a century, whose melancholy pipe, in his old age, may make the reader "rew:"

"Yet he himself may rewed be more right,
That sung so long untill quite hoarse he grew."

His epitaph, preserved by Camden, is extremely instructive to all poets, could epitaphs instruct them:

"*Poverty* and *poetry* his tomb doth inclose;
Wherefore, good neighbours, be merry in *prose*."

It appears also by a confession of Tom Nash, that an author would then, pressed by the *res angusta domi*, when "the bottom of his purse was turned upward," submit to compose pieces for gentlemen who aspired to authorship. He tells us on some occasion, that he was then in the country composing poetry for some country squire;—and says, "I am faine to let my plow stand still in the midst of a furrow, to follow these Senior Fantasticos, to whose amorous *villanellas*[1] I prostitute my pen," and this, too, "twice or thrice in a month;" and he complains that it is "poverty which alone maketh me so unconstant to my determined studies, trudging from place to place to and fro, and prosecuting the means to keep me from idlenesse." An author was then much like a vagrant.

Even at a later period, in the reign of the literary James, great authors were reduced to a state of mendicity, and lived on alms, although their lives and their fortunes had been consumed in

[1] *Villanellas*, or rather "*Villanescas*, are properly country rustic songs, but commonly taken for ingenious ones made in imitation of them."—PINEDA.

forming national labours. The antiquary STOWE exhibits a striking example of the rewards conferred on such valued authors. Stowe had devoted his life, and exhausted his patrimony, in the study of English antiquities; he had travelled on foot throughout the kingdom, inspecting all monuments of antiquity, and rescuing what he could from the dispersed libraries of the monasteries. His stupendous collections, in his own hand-writing, still exist, to provoke the feeble industry of literary loiterers. He felt through life the enthusiasm of study; and seated in his monkish library, living with the dead more than with the living, he was still a student of taste: for Spenser the poet visited the library of Stowe; and the first good edition of Chaucer was made so chiefly by the labours of our author. Late in life, worn out with study and the cares of poverty, neglected by that proud metropolis of which he had been the historian, his good-humour did not desert him; for being afflicted with sharp pains in his aged feet, he observed that "his affliction lay in that part which formerly he had made so much use of." Many a mile had he wandered and much had he expended, for those treasures of antiquities which had exhausted his fortune, and with which he had formed works of great public utility. It was in his eightieth year that Stowe at length received a public acknowledgment of his services, which will appear to us of a very extraordinary nature. He was so reduced in his circumstances that he petitioned James I. for a *licence to collect alms* for himself! "as a recompense for his labour and travel of *forty-five years*, in setting forth the *Chronicles of England*, and *eight years* taken up in the *Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, towards his relief now in his old age; having left his former means of living, and only employing himself for the service and good of his country." Letters patent under the great seal were granted. After no penurious commendation of Stowe's labours, he is permitted "to gather the benevolence of well-disposed people within this realm of England: to ask, gather, and take the alms of all our loving subjects." These letters-patent were to be published by the clergy from their pulpit; they produced so little that they were renewed for another twelvemonth: one entire parish in the city contributed seven shillings and sixpence! Such then was the patronage received by Stowe, to be a licensed beggar throughout the kingdom for one twelvemonth! Such was the public remuneration of a man who had been useful to his nation, but not to himself!

Such was the first age of *Patronage*, which branched out in the last century into an age of *Subscriptions*, when an author levied contributions before his work appeared; a mode which inundated our literature with a great portion of its worthless

volumes: of these the most remarkable are the splendid publications of Richard Blome; they may be called fictitious works; for they are only mutilated transcripts from Camden and Speed, but richly ornamented, and pompously printed, which this literary adventurer, said to have been a gentleman, loaded the world with, by the aid of his subscribers. Another age was that of *Dedications*[1], when the author was to lift his tiny patron to the skies, in an inverse ratio as he lowered himself, in this public exhibition. Sometimes the party haggled about the price[2]; or the statue, while stepping into his niche, would turn round on the author to assist his invention. A patron of Peter Motteux, dissatisfied with Peter's colder temperament, composed the superlative dedication to himself, and completed the misery of the author by inscribing it with Motteux name[3]! Worse fared it when authors were the unlucky hawkers of their own works; of which I shall give a remarkable instance in MYLES DAVIES a learned man maddened by want and indignation.

[1] This practice of dedications had indeed flourished before; for authors had even prefixed numerous dedications to the same work, or dedicated to different patrons, the separate divisions. Fuller's "Church History" is disgraced by the introduction of twelve title pages, besides the general one; with as many particular dedications, and no less than fifty or sixty inscriptions, addressed to benefactors; for which he is severely censured by Heylin. It was an expedient to procure dedication fees; for publishing books by *subscription* was an art not then discovered.

[2] The price of the dedication of a play was even fixed, from five to ten guineas, from the Revolution to the time of George I.; when it rose to twenty—but sometimes a bargain was to be struck—when the author and the play were alike indifferent. Even on these terms could vanity be gratified with the coarse luxury of panegyric, of which every one knew the price.

[3] This circumstance was so notorious at the time, that it occasioned a poetical satire in a dialogue between Motteux and his patron Henningham—preserved in that vast flower-bed or dunghill, for it is both, of "Poems on Affairs of State," vol. ii. 251. The patron, in his zeal to omit no possible distinction that could attach to him, had given one circumstance which no one but himself could have known, and which he thus regrets:

"PATRON.

I must confess I was to blame
That one particular to name;
The rest could never have been known,
I made the style so like thy own.

POET.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for that!

PATRON.

Why d——e what would you be at?
I writ below myself, you sot!
Avoiding figures, tropes, what not;
For fear I should my fancy *raise*
Above the level of thy plays!"

The subject before us exhibits one of the most singular spectacles in these volumes; that of a scholar of extensive erudition, whose life seems to have passed in the study of languages and the sciences, while his faculties appear to have been disordered from the simplicity of his nature, and driven to madness by indigence and insult. He formed the wild resolution of becoming a mendicant author; the hawker of his own works; and by this mode endured all the aggravated sufferings, the great and the petty insults of all ranks of society, and even sometimes from men of learning themselves, who denied a mendicant author the sympathy of a brother.

Myles Davies and his works are imperfectly known to the most curious of our literary collectors. His name has scarcely reached a few; the author and his works are equally extraordinary, and claim a right to be preserved in this treatise on the Calamities of Authors.

Our author commenced printing a work, difficult, from its miscellaneous character, to describe; of which the volumes appeared at different periods. The early and the most valuable volumes were the first and second; they are a kind of biographical, and critical work, on English authors. They all bear a general title of "Athenæ Britannicæ.'"

Collectors have sometimes met with a very curious volume, entitled "Icon Libellorum, and sometimes the same book, under another title,—"A Critical History of Pamphlets." This rare book forms the first volume of the "Athenæ Britannicæ." The author was Myles Davies, whose biography is quite unknown: he may now be his own biographer. He was a Welsh clergyman, a vehement foe to Popery, Arianism, and Socianism, of the most fervent loyalty to George I. and the Hanoverian succession; a scholar, skilled in Greek and Latin, and in all the

[1] *Athenæ Britannicæ*, or a Critical History of the Oxford and Cambridge Writers and Writings, with those of the Dissenters and Romanists as well as other Authors and Worthies, both Domestic and Foreign, both Ancient and Modern. Together with an occasional freedom of thought, in criticising and comparing the parallel qualifications of the most eminent authors and their performances, both in MS. and print, both at home and abroad. By M. D. London, 1716." On the first volume of this series Dr. Farmer, a bloodhound of unfailing scent in curious and obscure English books, has written on the leaf "This is the only copy I have met with." Even the great bibliographer, Baker, of Cambridge, never met but with three volumes (the edition at the British Museum is in seven) sent him as a great curiosity by the Earl of Oxford, and now deposited in his collection at St. John's College. Baker has written this memorandum in the first volume: "Few copies were printed, so the work is become scarce, and for that reason will be valued. The book in the greatest part is borrowed from modern historians, but yet contains some things more uncommon, and not easily to be met with." How superlatively rare must be the English volumes which the eyes of Farmer and Baker never lighted on!

modern languages. Quitting his native spot with political disgust, he changed his character in the metropolis, for he subscribes himself "Counsellor-at-Law." In an evil hour he commenced author, not only surrounded by his books, but with the more urgent companions of a wife and family; and with that childlike simplicity which sometimes marks the mind of a retired scholar, we perceive him imagining that his immense reading would prove a source, not easily exhausted, for their subsistence.

From the first volumes of his series much curious literary history may be extracted, amidst the loose and wandering elements of this literary chaos. In his dedication to the prince he professes "to represent writers and writings in a catoptrick view."

The preface to the second volume opens his plan; and nothing as yet indicates those rambling humours which his subsequent labours exhibit.

As he proceeded in forming these volumes, I suspect, either that his mind became a little disordered, or that he discovered that mere literature found but penurious patrons in "the Few;" for, attempting to gain over all classes of society, he varied his investigations, and courted attention, by writing on law, physic, divinity, as well as literary topics. By his account—

"The avarice of booksellers, and the stinginess of hard-hearted patrons, had driven him into a cursed company of door-keeping herds, to meet the irrational brutality of those uneducated mischievous animals called footmen, house-porters, poetasters, mumpers, apothecaries, attorneys, and suchlike beasts of prey," who were, like himself, sometimes barred up for hours in the ménagerie of a great man's antechamber. In his addresses to Drs. Mead and Freind, he declares—"My misfortunes drive me to publish my writings for a poor livelihood; and nothing but the utmost necessity could make any man in his senses to endeavour at it, in a method so burthensome to the modesty and education of a scholar."

In French he dedicates to George I.; and in the Harleian MSS. I discovered a long letter to the Earl of Oxford, by our author, in French, with a Latin ode. Never was more innocent bribery offered to a minister! He composed what he calls *Strictura Pindaricæ* on the "Mughouses," then political clubs; celebrates English authors in the same odes, and inserts a political Latin drama, called "Pallas Anglicana." Mævius and Bavius were never more indefatigable! The author's intellect gradually discovers its confusion amidst the loud cries of penury and despair.

To paint the distresses of an author soliciting alms for a book which he presents—and which, whatever may be its value,

comes at least as an evidence that the suppliant is a learned man, is a case so uncommon, that the invention of the novelist seems necessary to fill up the picture. But Myles Davies is an artist, in his own simple narrative.

Our author has given the names of several of his unwilling customers:—

"Those squeeze-farthing and hoard-penny ignoramus doctors, with several great personages who formed excuses for not accepting my books; or they would receive them, but give nothing for them; or else deny that they had them, or remembered anything of them; and so gave me nothing for my last present of books, though they kept them *gratis et ingratis*.

"But his grace of the Dutch extraction in Holland (said to be akin to Mynheer Vander B—nck) had a peculiar grace in receiving my present of books and odes, which, being bundled up together with a letter and ode upon his graceship, and carried in by his porter, I was bid to call for an answer five years hence. I asked the porter what he meant by that? I suppose, said he, four or five days hence—but it proved five or six months after, before I could get any answer, though I had writ five or six letters in French with fresh odes upon his graceship, and an account where I lived, and what noblemen had accepted of my present. I attended about the door three or four times a week all that time constantly from twelve to four or five o'clock, in the evening; and walking under the fore windows of the parlours, once that time his and her grace came after dinner to stare at me, with open windows and shut mouths, but filled with fair water, which they spouted with so much dexterity that they twisted the water through their teeth and mouth-skrew, to flash near my face, and yet just to miss me, though my nose could not well miss the natural flavour of the orange-water showering so very near me. Her grace began the water-work, but not very gracefully, especially for an English lady of her description, airs, and qualities, to make a stranger her spitting-post, who had been guilty of no other offence than to offer her husband some writings. — His grace followed, yet first stood looking so wistfully towards me, that I verily thought he had a mind to throw me a guinea or two for all these indignities, and two or three months' then sleeveless waiting upon him—and accordingly I advanced to address his grace to remember the poor author, but, instead of an answer, he immediately undams his mouth, out fly whole showers of lymphatic rockets, which had like to have put out my mortal eyes."

Still he was not disheartened, and still applied for his bundle of books, which were returned to him at length unopened, with "half a guinea upon top of the cargo," and "with a desire

to receive no more." I plucked up courage, murmuring within myself—

'Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.'"

He sarcastically observes,

"As I was still jogging on homewards, I thought that a great many were called *their Graces*, not for any grace or favour they had truly deserved with God or man, but for the same reason of contraries, that the *Parcæ* or Destinies, were so called, because they spared none, or were not truly the *Parcæ, quia non parcebant.*"

Our indigent and indignant author, by the faithfulness of his representations, mingles with his anger some ludicrous scenes of literary mendicity.

"I can't choose (now I am upon the fatal subject) but make one observation or two more upon the various rencontres and adventures I met withall, in presenting my books to those who were likely to accept of them for their own information, or for that of helping a poor scholar, or for their own vanity or ostentation.

"Some parsons would hollow to raise the whole house and posse of the domestics to raise a poor *crown;* at last all that flutter ends in sending Jack or Tom out to change a guinea, and then 'tis reckoned over half-a-dozen times before the fatal crown can be picked out, which must be taken as it is given, with all the parade of almsgiving, and so to be received with all the active and passive ceremonial of mendication and alms-receiving —as if the books, printing and paper, were worth nothing at all, and as if it were the greatest charity for them to touch them or let them be in the house; 'For I shall never read them,' says one of the five-shilling-piece-chaps—'I have no time to look in them,' says another;—'Tis so much money lost,' says a grave dean;—'My eyes being so bad,' said a bishop, 'that I can scarce read at all.'—'What do you want with me?' said another; 'Sir, I presented you the other day with my *Athenæ Britannicæ*, being the last part published.'—'I don't want books, take them again; I don't understand what they mean.' 'The title is very plain,' said I, 'and they are writ mostly in English.' 'I'll give you a crown for both the volumes.' 'They stand me, sir, in more than that, and 'tis for a bare subsistence I present or sell them; how shall I live?' 'I care not a farthing for that, live or die, 'tis all one to me.'—'Damn my master!' says Jack, 'twas but last night he was commending your books and your learning to the skies; and now he would not care if you were starving before his eyes; nay, he often makes game at your clothes, though he thinks you the greatest scholar in England."

Such was the life of a learned mendicant author! The scenes which are here exhibited appear to have disordered an intellect which had never been firm; in vain our author attempted to adapt his talents to all orders of men, still "To the crazy ship, all winds are contrary."

COWLEY.

OF HIS MELANCHOLY.

THE mind of COWLEY was beautiful, but a querulous tenderness in his nature breathes not only through his works, but influenced his habits and his views of human affairs. His temper and his genius would have opened to us, had not the strange decision of Sprat and Clifford withdrawn that full correspondence of his heart which he had carried on many years. These letters were suppressed because, as Bishop Sprat acknowledges, "in this kind of prose Mr. Cowley was excellent! They had a domestical plainness, and a peculiar kind of familiarity." And then the florid writer runs off, that, "in letters, where the souls of men should appear undressed, in that negligent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or two in a chamber, but not to go abroad into the streets." A false criticism: which not only has proved to be so since their time by Mason's "Memoirs of Gray," but which these friends of Cowley might have themselves perceived, if they had recollected that the letters of Cicero to Atticus form the most delightful chronicles of the heart—and the most authentic memorials of the man. Peck obtained one letter of Cowley's, preserved by Johnson, and it exhibits a remarkable picture of the miseries of his political solitude. It is, perhaps, not too late to inquire, whether this correspondence was destroyed as well as suppressed? Would Sprat and Clifford have burned what they have told us they so much admired[1]?"

[1] My researches could never obtain more than one letter of Cowley's—it is but an elegant trifle—returning thanks to his friend Evelyn, for some seeds and plants. "The Garden" of Evelyn is immortalised in a delightful Ode of Cowley's, as well as by Evelyn himself. Even in this small note, we may discover the touch of Cowley. The original is in Astle's collection.

MR. ABRAHAM COWLEY TO JOHN EVELYN, ESQ.

Barn Elms, March 23, 1663.

"SIR,

"There is nothing more pleasant than to see kindness in a person, for whom we have great esteem and respect: no, not the sight of your garden in May, or

Fortunately for our literary sympathy, the fatal error of these fastidious critics has been in some degree repaired by the admirable genius himself whom they have injured. When Cowley retreated from society, he determined to draw up an apology for his conduct, and to have dedicated it to his patron, Lord St. Albans. His death interrupted the entire design; but his Essays, which Pope so finely calls "the language of his heart," are evidently part of these precious Confessions. All of Cowley's tenderest and undisguised feelings have therefore not perished. These Essays now form a species of composition in our language, a mixture of prose and verse—the man with the poet—the self-painter has sat to himself, and, with the utmost simplicity, has copied out the image of his soul.

Why has this poet twice called himself *the melancholy Cowley?* He employed no poetical *cheville*[1] for the metre of a verse which his own feelings inspired.

Cowley, at the beginning of the civil war, joined the royalists at Oxford; followed the queen to Paris; yielded his days and his nights to an employment of the highest confidence, that of deciphering the royal correspondence; he transacted their business, and, almost divorcing himself from his neglected muse, he

even the having such an one; which makes me more obliged to return you my most humble thanks for the testimonies I have lately received of you, both by your letter and your presents. I have already sowed such of your seeds as I thought most proper, upon a hot-bed; but cannot find in all my books a catalogue of these plants which require that culture, nor of such as must be set in pots; which defects, and all others, I hope shortly to see supplied, as I hope shortly to see your work of Horticulture finished and published; and long to be in all things your disciple, as I am in all things now,

Sir, Your most humble,
and most obedient Servant,
A. Cowley."

Such were the ordinary letters which passed between two men whom it would be difficult to parallel, for their elegant tastes and gentle dispositions. Evelyn's beautiful retreat at Sayes Court at Deptford is described by a contemporary as "a garden exquisite and most boscaresque, and, as it were, an exemplar of his book of Forest-trees." It was the entertainment and wonder of the greatest men of those times, and inspired the following lines of Cowley, to Evelyn and his Lady, who excelled in the arts her husband loved; for she designed the frontispiece to his version of Lucretius—

"In books and gardens thou hast placed aright
(Things well which thou dost understand,
And both dost make with thy laborious hand)
Thy noble innocent delight;
And in thy virtuous wife, where thou again dost meet
Both pleasures more refined and sweet;
The fairest garden in her looks,
And in her mind the wisest books."

[1] A term the French apply to those *botches* which bad poets use to make out their metre.

yielded up for them the tranquillity so necessary to the existence of a poet. From his earliest days he tells us how the poetic affections had stamped themselves on his heart, "like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which, with the tree, will grow proportionably."

He describes his feelings at the court:—

"I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life the nearer I came to it—that Beauty which I did not fall in love with when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw it was adulterate. I met with several great persons whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired. I was in a crowd of good company, in business of great and honourable trust; I eat at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences that ought to be desired by a man of my condition; yet I could not abstain from renewing my old school-boy's wish, in a copy of verses to the same effect:

> "Well then! I now do plainly see,
> This busie world and I shall ne'er agree!"

After several years' absence from his native country, at a most critical period, he was sent over to mix with that trusty band of loyalists, who, in secrecy and in silence, were devoting themselves to the royal cause. Cowley was seized on by the ruling powers. At this moment he published a preface to his works, which some of his party interpreted as a relaxation of his loyalty. He has been fully defended. Cowley, with all his delicacy of temper, wished sincerely to retire from all parties; and saw enough among the fiery zealots of his own, to grow disgusted even with royalists.

His wish for retirement has been half censured as cowardice, by Johnson; but there was a tenderness of feeling which had ill formed Cowley for the cunning of party intriguers, and the company of little villains. About this time he might have truly distinguished himself as "The melancholy Cowley."

I am only tracing his literary history for the purpose of this work: but I cannot pass without noticing the fact, that this abused man, whom his enemies were calumniating, was at this moment, under the disguise of a doctor of physic, occupied by the novel studies of botany and medicine; and as all science in the mind of the poet naturally becomes poetry, he composed his books on plants in Latin verse.

At length came the Restoration, which the poet zealously celebrated in his "Ode" on that occasion. Both Charles the First and Second had promised to reward his fidelity with the mastership of the Savoy; but, Wood says, "he lost it by certain

persons enemies of the muses." Wood has said no more; and none of Cowley's biographers have thrown any light on the circumstance; perhaps we may discover this literary calamity.

That Cowley caught no warmth from that promised sunshine which the new monarch was to scatter in prodigal gaiety, has been distinctly told by the poet himself; his muse, in "The complaint," having reproached him thus: —

"Thou young prodigal, who didst so loosely waste
Of all thy youthful years, the good estate—
Thou changeling then, bewitch'd with noise and show,
Wouldst into courts and cities from me go—
Go, renegado, cast up thy account—
Behold the public storm is spent at last;
The sovereign is toss'd at sea no more,
And thou, with all the noble company,
Art got at last to shore—
But whilst thy fellow-voyagers I see,
All march'd up to possess the promised land;
Thou still alone (alas!) dost gaping stand
Upon the naked beach, upon the barren sand."

But neglect was not all Cowley had to endure; the royal party seemed disposed to calumniate him. When Cowley was young he had hastily composed the comedy of "The Guardian;" a piece which served the cause of loyalty. After the Restoration, he rewrote it under the title of "Cutter of Coleman Street;" a comedy which may still be read with equal curiosity and interest: a spirited picture of the peculiar characters which appeared at the Revolution. It was not only ill received by a faction, but by those vermin of a new court, who, without merit themselves, put in their claims, by crying down those who, with great merit, are not in favour. All these to a man accused the author of having written a satire against the king's party. And this wretched party prevailed, too long for the author's repose, but not for his fame. Many years afterwards this comedy became popular. Dryden, who was present at the representation, tells us, that Cowley "received the news of his ill success not with so much firmness as might have been expected from so great a man." Cowley was in truth a great man, and a greatly injured man. His sensibility and delicacy of temper were of another texture than Dryden's. What at that moment did Cowley experience, when he beheld himself neglected, calumniated, and, in his last appeal to public favour, found himself still a victim to a vile faction; who, to court their common master, were trampling on their honest brother?

We shall find an unbroken chain of evidence, clearly demonstrating the agony of his literary feelings. The cynical Wood tells us, that, "not finding that preferment he expected, while

others for their money carried away most places, he retired discontented into Surrey." And his panegyrist, Sprat, describes him as "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition—he had been perplexed with a long compliance with foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a court, which sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. Those were the reasons that moved him to follow the violent inclination of his own mind," etc. I doubt if either the sarcastic antiquary or the rhetorical panegyrist have developed the simple truth of Cowley's "violent inclination of his own mind." He does it himself more openly in that beautiful picture of an injured poet, in "The Complaint," an ode warm with individual feeling, but which Johnson coldly passes over, by telling us that "it met the usual fortune of complaints, and seems to have excited more contempt than pity."

Thus the biographers of Cowley have told us nothing, and the poet himself has probably not told us all. To these calumnies respecting Cowley's comedy, raised up by those whom Wood designates as "enemies of the muses," it would appear that others were added of a deeper dye, and in malignant whispers distilled into the ear of royalty. Cowley, in an ode, had commemorated the genius of Brutus, with all the enthusiasm of a votary of liberty. After the king's return, when Cowley solicited some reward for his sufferings and services in the royal cause, the chancellor is said to have turned on him with a severe countenance, saying, "Mr. Cowley, your pardon is your reward!" It seems that ode was then considered to be of a dangerous tendency among half the nation; Brutus would be the model of enthusiasts, who were sullenly bending their neck under the yoke of royalty. Charles II. feared the attempt of desperate men; and he might have forgiven Rochester a loose pasquinade, but not Cowley a solemn invocation. This fact then is said to have been the true cause of the despondence so prevalent in the latter poetry of "the melancholy Cowley." And hence the indiscretion of the muse, in a single flight, condemned her to a painful, rather than a voluntary solitude; and made the poet complain of "barren praise" and "neglected verse [1]."

While this anecdote harmonises with better known facts, it throws some light on the outcry raised against the comedy, which seems to have been but an echo of some preceding one. Cowley retreated into solitude, where he found none of the agrestic charms of the landscapes of his muse. When in the

[1] The anecdote, probably little known, may be found in "The judgment of Dr. Prideaux in condemning the murder of Julius Cæsar by the conspirators as a most villanous act, maintained, 1721," p. 41.

world, Sprat says, "he had never wanted for constant health and strength of body;" but, thrown into solitude, he carried with him a wounded spirit—the Ode of Brutus and the condemnation of his comedy were the dark spirits that haunted his cottage. Ill health soon succeeded low spirits—he pined in dejection, and perished a victim of the finest and most injured feelings.

But before we leave *the melancholy Cowley*, he shall speak the feelings, which here are not exaggerated. In this Chronicle of Literary Calamity, no passage ought to be more memorable than the solemn confession of one of the most amiable of men and poets.

Thus he expresses himself in the preface to his "Cutter of Coleman Street:"

"We are, therefore, wonderful wise men, and have a fine business of it; we, who spend our time in poetry. I do sometimes laugh, and am often angry with myself, when I think on it; and if I had a son inclined by nature to the same folly, I believe I should bind him from it by the strictest conjurations of a paternal blessing. For what can be more ridiculous than to labour to give men delight, whilst they labour, on their part, most earnestly, to take offence?"

And thus he closes the preface, in all the solemn expression of injured feelings:—"This I do affirm, that *from all which I have written*, I never *received the least benefit, or the least advantage; but, on the contrary, have felt sometimes the effects of malice and misfortune!*"

Cowley's ashes were deposited between those of Chaucer and Spenser; a marble monument was erected by a duke; and his eulogy was pronounced, on the day of his death, from the lips of royalty. The learned wrote, and the tuneful wept: well might the neglected bard, in his retirement, compose an epitaph on himself, living there "entombed, though not dead."

To this ambiguous state of existence he applies a conceit, not inelegant, from the tenderness of its imagery:

"Hic sparge flores, sparge breves rosas,
Nam vita gaudet mortua floribus;
Herbisque odoratis corona
Vatis adhuc cinerem calentem."

IMITATED.

Here scatter flowers and short-lived roses bring,
For life, though dead, enjoys the flowers of spring;
With breathing wreaths of fragrant herbs adorn
The yet warm embers in the poet's urn.

THE PAINS OF FASTIDIOUS EGOTISM.

I MUST place the author of "The Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors," who himself now ornaments that roll, among those who have participated in the misfortunes of literature.

HORACE WALPOLE was the inheritor of a name the most popular in Europe; he moved in the higher circles of society; and fortune had never denied him the ample gratification of his lively tastes in the elegant arts, and in curious knowledge. These were particular advantages. But Horace Walpole panted with a secret desire for literary celebrity; a full sense of his distinguished rank long suppressed the desire of venturing the name he bore to the uncertain fame of an author, and the caprice of vulgar critics. At length he pretended to shun authors, and to slight the honours of authorship. The cause of this contempt has been attributed to the perpetual consideration of his rank. But was this bitter contempt of so early a date? Was Horace Walpole a Socrates before his time? was he born that prodigy of indifference, to despise the secret object he languished to possess? His early associates were not only noblemen, but literary noblemen; and need he have been so petulantly fastidious at bearing the venerable title of author, when he saw Lyttelton, Chesterfield, and other peers, proud of wearing the blue riband of literature? No! it was after he had become an author that he contemned authorship; and it was not the precocity of his sagacity, but the maturity of his experience, that made him willing enough to undervalue literary honours, which were not sufficient to satisfy his desires.

Let us estimate the genius of Horace Walpole, by analysing his talents, and inquiring into the nature of his works.

His taste was highly polished; his vivacity attained to brilliancy [1]; and his picturesque fancy, easily excited, was soon

[1] In his letters there are uncommon instances of vivacity, whenever pointed against authors. The following have not yet met the public eye. What can be more maliciously pungent than this on Spence? "As I knew Mr. J. Spence, I do not think I should have been so much delighted as Dr. Kippis with reading his letters. He was a good-natured harmless little soul, but more like a silver penny than a genius. It was a neat fiddle faddle bit of sterling, that had read good books, and kept good company; but was too trifling for use, and only fit to please a child."—On Dr. Nash's first volume of 'Worcestershire': "It is a folio of prodigious corpulence, and yet dry enough; but it is finely dressed with many heads and views." He characterises Pennant; "*He* is not one of our plodders (alluding to Gough); rather the other extreme; his *corporal* spirits (for I cannot call them *animal*) do not allow him to digest anything. He gave a round jump from ornithology to antiquity, and, as if they had any relation,

extinguished; his playful wit and keen irony were perpetually exercised in his observations on life, and his memory was stored with the most amusing knowledge, but much too lively to be accurate; for his studies were but his sports. But other qualities of genius must distinguish the great author, and even him who would occupy that leading rank in the literary republic our author aspired to fill. He lived too much in that class of society which is little favourable to genius; he exerted neither profound thinking, nor profound feeling; and too volatile to attain to the pathetic, that higher quality of genius, he was so imbued with the petty elegances of society, that every impression of grandeur in the human character was deadened in the breast of the polished cynic.

Horace Walpole was not a man of genius,—his most pleasing, if not his great talent, lay in letter-writing; here he was without a rival[1]; but he probably divined, when he condescended to become an author, that something more was required than the talents he exactly possessed. In his latter days he felt this more sensibly, which will appear in those confessions which I have extracted from an unpublished correspondence.

Conscious of possessing the talent which amuses, yet feeling his deficient energies, he resolved to provide various substitutes for genius itself; and to acquire reputation, if he could not grasp at celebrity. He raised a printing-press at his Gothic castle, by which means he rendered small editions of his works valuable from their rarity, and much talked of, because seldom seen. That this is true, appears from the following extract from his unpublished correspondence with a literary friend. It alludes to his "Anecdotes of Painting in England," of which the first edition only consisted of 300 copies.

thought he understood everything that lay between them. The report of his being disordered is not true; he has been with me, and at least is as composed as ever I saw him." His literary correspondence with his friend Cole abounds with this easy satirical criticism—He delighted to ridicule authors!—as well as to starve the miserable artists he so grudgingly paid. In the very volumes he celebrated the arts, he disgraced them by his penuriousness; so that he loved to indulge his avarice at the expense of his vanity!

[1] This opinion on Walpole's talent for letter-writing was published in 1812, many years before the public had the present collection of his letters; my prediction has been amply verified. He wrote a great number to Bentley, the son of Dr. Bentley, who ornamented Gray's works with some extraordinary designs. Walpole, who was always proud and capricious, observes his friend Cole, broke with Bentley because he would bring his wife with him to Strawberry-hill. He then asked Bentley for all his letters back, but he would not in return give Bentley's own.

This whole correspondence abounded with literature, criticism, and wit, of the most original and brilliant composition. This is the opinion of no friend, but an admirer, and a good judge; for it was Bentley's own.

"Of my new fourth volume I printed 600; but, as they can be had, I believe not a third part is sold. This is a very plain lesson to me, that my editions sell for their curiosity, and not for any merit in them—and so they would if I printed Mother Goose's Tales, and but a few. If I am humbled as an author, I may be vain as a printer; and when one has nothing else to be vain of, it is certainly very little worth while to be proud of that."

There is a distinction between the author of great connexions and the mere author. In the one case, the man may give a temporary existence to his books; but in the other, it is the book which gives existence to the man.

Walpole's writings seem to be constructed on a certain principle, by which he gave them a sudden, rather than a lasting existence. In historical research, our adventurer startled the world by maintaining paradoxes which attacked the opinions, or changed the characters, established for centuries. Singularity of opinion, vivacity of ridicule, and polished epigrams in prose, were the means by which Horace Walpole sought distinction.

In his works of imagination, he felt he could not trust to himself—the natural pathetic was utterly denied him. But he had fancy and ingenuity; he had recourse to the *marvellous* in imagination, on the principle he had adopted the *parodoxical* in history. Thus, "The Castle of Otranto," and "The Mysterious Mother," are the productions of ingenuity rather than genius; and display the miracles of art, rather than the spontaneous creations of nature.

All his literary works, like the ornamented edifice he inhabited, were constructed on the same artificial principle; an old paper lodging-house, converted by the magician of taste into a Gothic castle, full of scenic effects.

"A Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors" was itself a classification which only an idle amateur could have projected, and only the most agreeable narrator of anecdotes could have seasoned. These splendid scribblers are for the greater part no authors at all [1].

[1] Walpole's characters are not often to be relied on, witness his injustice to Hogarth as a painter, and his insolent calumny of Charles I. His literary opinions of James I. and of Sidney, might have been written without any acquaintance with the works he has so maliciously criticised. In his account of Sidney he had silently passed over the "Defence of Poetry;" and in his second edition has written this avowal that "he had forgotten it; a proof that I at least did not think it sufficient foundation for so high a character as he acquired." How heartless was the polished cynicism which could dare to hazard this false criticism! Nothing can be more imposing than his volatile and caustic criticisms on the works of James I., yet he had probably never opened that folio he so poignantly ridicules. He doubts whether two pieces "The Prince's Cabala," and "The Duty of a King in his Royal Office," were genuine productions of James I.

His attack on our peerless Sidney, whose fame was more mature than his life, was formed on the same principle as his "Historic Doubts" on Richard III. Horace Walpole was as willing to vilify the truly great, as to beautify deformity, when he imagined that the fame he was destroying or conferring, reflected back on himself. All these works were plants of sickly delicacy, which could never endure the open air, and only lived in the artificial atmosphere of a private collection.—Yet at times the flowers, and the planter of the flowers, were roughly shaken by an uncivil breeze.

His "Anecdotes of Painting in England," is a most entertaining catalogue. He gives the feelings of the distinct eras with regard to the arts; yet his pride was never gratified when he reflected that he had been writing the work of Vertue, who had collected the materials, but could not have given the philosophy. His great age and his good sense opened his eyes on himself; and Horace Walpole seems to have judged too contemptuously of Horace Walpole. The truth is, he was mortified he had not and never could obtain, a literary peerage; and he never respected the commoner's seat. At these moments, too frequent in his life, he contemns authors, and returns to sink back into all the self-complacency of aristocratic indifference.

This cold unfeeling disposition for literary men, this disguised malice of envy, and this eternal vexation at his own disappointments,—break forth in his correspondence with one of those literary characters, with whom he kept on terms while they were kneeling to him in the humility of worship, or moved about to fetch or to carry his little quests of curiosity in town or country [1].

The following literary confessions illustrate this character.

"June, 1778.

"I have taken a thorough dislike to being an author; and, if

The truth is that both these works are nothing more than extracts printed with those separate titles and drawn from the king's "Basilicon Doron." He had probably neither read the extracts nor the original.

[1] It was such a person as Cole of Milton, his correspondent of forty years, who lived at a distance, and obsequious to his wishes, always looking up to him, though never with a parallel glance—with whom he did not quarrel, though if Walpole could have read the private notes *Cole* made in his MSS. at the time he was often writing the civilest letters of admiration,—even *Cole* would have been cashiered from his correspondence. *Walpole* could not endure equality in literary men.—Bentley observed to Cole, that Walpole's pride and hauteur were excessive; which betrayed themselves in the treatment of *Gray*, who had himself too much pride and spirit *to forgive it* when matters were made up between them, and Walpole invited Gray to Strawberry-hill. When *Gray* came, he without any ceremony told Walpole, that though he waited on him as civility required, yet by *no means would he ever be there on the terms of their former friendship, which he had totally cancelled.*—From COLE's MSS.

it would not look like begging you to compliment one by contradicting me, I would tell you what I am most seriously convinced of, that I find what small share of parts I had, grown dulled. And when I perceive it myself, I may well believe that others would not be less sharp-sighted. *It is very natural*; mine were *spirits* rather than *parts*; and as time has rebated the one, it must surely destroy *their resemblance* to the other."

In another letter:—

"I set very little value on myself; as a man, I am a very faulty one; and *as an author, a very middling one,* which *whoever thinks a comfortable rank, is not at all of my opinion.* Pray convince me that you think I mean sincerely, by not answering me with a compliment. It is very weak to be pleased with flattery; the stupidest of all delusions to beg it. From you I should take it ill. We have known one another almost forty years."

There were times when Horace Walpole's natural taste for his studies returned with all the vigour of passion—but his volatility, and his desultory life, perpetually scattered his firmest resolutions into air. This conflict appears beautifully described when the view of King's College, Cambridge, throws his mind into meditation; and the passion for study and seclusion instantly kindled his emotions, lasting, perhaps, as long as the letter which describes them occupied in writing.

"May 22, 1777.

"The beauty of King's College, Cambridge, now it is restored, penetrated me with a visionary longing to be a monk in it. Though my life has been passed in turbulent scenes, in pleasures or rather pastimes, and in much fashionable dissipation; still books, antiquity, and virtue, kept hold of a corner of my heart: and since necessity has forced me of late years to be a man of business, my disposition tends to be a recluse for what remains —but it will not be my lot; and though there is some excuse for the young doing what they like, I doubt an old man should do nothing but what he ought, and I hope doing one's duty is the best preparation for death. Sitting with one's arms folded to think about it, is a very long way for preparing for it. If Charles V. had resolved to make some amends for his abominable ambition by doing good (his duty as a king), there would have been infinitely more merit than going to doze in a convent. One may avoid active guilt in a sequestered life; but the virtue of it is merely negative; the innocence is beautiful."

There had been moments when Horace Walpole even expressed the tenderest feelings for fame; and the following pas-

sage, written prior to the preceding ones, gives no indication of that contempt for literary fame, of which the close of this character will exhibit an extraordinary instance.

This letter relates an affecting event—he had just returned from seeing General Conway attacked by a paralytic stroke. Shocked by his appearance, he writes—

"It is, perhaps, to vent my concern that I write. It has operated such a revolution on my mind, as no time, at *my age*, can efface. It has at once damped every pursuit which my spirits had even now prevented me from being weaned from, I mean of virtu. It is like a mortal distemper in myself; for can amusements amuse, if there is but a glimpse, a vision of outliving one's friends? *I have had dreams in which I thought I wished for fame—it was not certainly posthumous fame at any distance; I feel, I feel it was confined to the memory of those I love.* It seems to me impossible for a man who has no friends, to do anything for fame—and to me the first position in friendship is, to intend one's friends should survive one—but it is not reasonable to oppress you, who are suffering gout, with my melancholy ideas. What I have said will tell you, what I hope so many years have told you, that I am very constant and sincere to friends of above forty years."

In a letter of a later date there is a remarkable confession, which harmonises with those already given.

"My pursuits have always been light, trifling, and tended to nothing but my casual amusement. I will not say, without a little vain ambition of showing some parts, but never with industry sufficient to make me apply to anything solid. My studies, if they could be called so, and my productions, were alike desultory. In my latter age I discovered the futility both of my objects and writings—I felt how insignificant is the reputation of an author of mediocrity; and that, being no genius, I only added one name more to a list of writers; but had told the world nothing but what it could as well be without. These reflections were the best proofs of my sense; and when I could see through my own vanity, there is less wonder in my discovering that such talents as I might have had, are impaired at seventy-two."

Thus humbled was Horace Walpole to himself!—there is an intellectual dignity, which this man of wit and sense was incapable of reaching—and it seems a retribution, that the scorner of true greatness should at length feel the poisoned chalice return to his own lips. He who had contemned the eminent men of former times, and quarrelled with and ridiculed every contempo-

rary genius; who had affected to laugh at the literary fame he could not obtain,—at length came to scorn himself! and endured "the penal fires" of an author's hell in undervaluing his own works, the productions of a long life!

The chagrin and disappointment of such an author were never less carelessly concealed, than in the following extraordinary letter:—

HORACE WALPOLE TO ——

"Arlington Street, April 27, 1773.

"Mr. Gough wants to be introduced to me! Indeed! I would see him, as he has been midwife to Masters; but he is so dull that he would only be troublesome—and besides, you know I shun authors, and would never have been one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company. They are always in earnest, and think their profession serious, and dwell upon trifles, and reverence learning. I laugh at all these things, and write only to laugh at them and divert myself. None of us are authors of any consequence, and it is the most ridiculous of all vanities to be vain of being *mediocre*. A page in a great author humbles me to the dust, and the conversation of those that are not superior to myself, reminds me of what will be thought of myself. I blush to flatter them, or to be flattered by them; and should dread letters being published some time or other, in which they would relate our interviews, and we should appear like those puny conceited witlings in Shenstone's and Hughes's correspondence, who give themselves airs from being in possession of the soil of Parnassus for the time being; as peers are proud because they enjoy the estates of great men who went before them. Mr. Gough is very welcome to see Strawberry-hill, or I would help him to any scraps in my possession that would assist his publications, though he is one of those industrious who are only re-burying the dead—but I cannot be acquainted with him; it is contrary to my system and my humour; and besides I know nothing of barrows and Danish entrenchments, and Saxon barbarisms and Phœnician characters—in short, I know nothing of those ages that knew nothing—then how should I be of use to modern literati? All the Scotch metaphysicians have sent me their works. I did not read one of them, because I do not understand what is not understood by those that write about it; and I did not get acquainted with one of the writers. I should like to be intimate with Mr. Anstey, even though he wrote Lord Buckhorse, or with the author of the Heroic Epistle—I have no thirst to know the rest of my contemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith, though the latter changeling

has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense, till he changed it for words, and sold it for a pension. Don't think me scornful. Recollect that I have seen Pope, and lived with Gray. —Adieu!"

Such a letter seems not to have been written by a literary man —it is the babble of a thoughtless wit and a man of the world. But it is worthy of him whose contracted heart could never open to patronage or friendship. From such we might expect the unfeeling observation in the "Anecdotes of Painting," that "want of patronage is the apology for want of genius. Milton and La Fontaine did not write in the bask of court-favour. A poet or a painter may want an equipage or a villa, by wanting protection; they can always afford to buy ink and paper, colours and pencil. Mr. Hogarth has received no honours, but universal admiration." Patronage, indeed, cannot convert dull men into men of genius, but it may preserve men of genius from becoming dull men. It might have afforded Dryden that studious leisure which he ever wanted, and which would have given us not imperfect tragedies, and uncorrected poems, but the regulated flights of a noble genius. It might have animated Gainsborough to have created an English school in landscape, which I have heard from those who knew him was his favourite yet neglected pursuit. But Walpole could insult that genius, which he wanted the generosity to protect!

The whole spirit of this man was penury. Enjoying an affluent income, he only appeared to patronise the arts which amused his tastes,—employing the meanest artists, at reduced prices, to ornament his own works, an economy which he bitterly reprehends in others who were compelled to practise it. He gratified his avarice at the expense of his vanity; the strongest passion must prevail. It was the simplicity of childhood in Chatterton, to imagine Horace Walpole could be a patron—but it is melancholy to record, that a slight protection might have saved such a youth. Gray abandoned this man of birth and rank, in the midst of their journey through Europe; Mason broke with him; even his humble correspondent Cole, this "friend of forty years," was often sent away in dudgeon; and he quarrelled with all the authors and artists he had ever been acquainted with. The Gothic castle at Strawberry-hill was rarely graced with living genius—there the greatest was Horace Walpole himself; but he had been too long waiting to see realised a magical vision of his hopes, which resembled the prophetic fiction of his own romance, that "the owner should grow too large for his house." After many years, having discovered that he still retained his mediocrity, he could never pardon the presence of that preternatural being whom the world considered a GREAT MAN.—Such was the feeling which

dictated the close of the above letter; Johnson and Goldsmith were to be "scorned," since Pope and Gray were no more within the reach of his envy and his fear.

INFLUENCE OF A BAD TEMPER IN CRITICISM.

UNFRIENDLY to the literary character some have imputed the brutality of certain authors to their literary habits, when it may be more truly said, that they derived their literature from their brutality. The spirit was envenomed before it entered into the fierceness of literary controversy, and the insanity was in the evil temper of the man before he roused our notice by his ravings. RITSON, the late antiquary of poetry (not to call him poetical), amazed the world by his vituperative railing at two authors of the finest taste in poetry, Warton and Percy; he carried criticism, as the discerning few had first surmised, to insanity itself; the character before us only approached it.

DENNIS attained to the ambiguous honour of being distinguished as "The Critic," and he may yet instruct us how the moral influences the literary character, and how a certain talent that can never mature itself into genius, like the pale fruit that hangs in the shade, ripens only into sourness.

As a Critic, in his own day, party for some time kept him alive; the art of criticism was a novelty at that period of our literature. He flattered some great men, and he abused three of the greatest; this was one mode of securing popularity; because, by this contrivance, he divided the town into two parties; and the irascibility and satire of Pope and Swift were not less serviceable to him, than the partial panegyrics of Dryden and Congreve. Johnson revived him, for his minute attack on Addison; and Kippis, feebly voluminous, and with the cold affectation of candour, allows him to occupy a place in our literary history, too large in the eye of Truth and Taste.

Let us say all the good we can of him, that we may not be interrupted in a more important inquiry. Dennis once urged fair pretensions to the office of critic. Some of his "Original Letters," and particularly the "Remarks on Prince Arthur," written in his vigour, attain even to classical criticism [1]. Aristotle and

[1] It is curious to observe, that Kippis, who classifies with the pomp of enumeration his heap of pamphlets, imagines that, as Blackmore's Epic is consigned to oblivion, so likewise must be the criticism, which, however, he confesses he could never meet with. An odd fate attends Dennis's works: his criticism on a bad work ought to survive it, as good works have survived his criticisms.

Bossu lay open before him, and he develops and sometimes illustrates their principles, with close reasoning. Passion had not yet blinded the young critic with rage; and in that happy moment, Virgil occupied his attention even more than Blackmore.

The prominent feature in his literary character was good sense; but in literature, though not in life, good sense is a penurious virtue. Dennis could not be carried beyond the cold line of a precedent, and before he ventured to be pleased, he was compelled to look into Aristotle. His learning was the bigotry of literature. It was ever Aristotle explained by Dennis. But in the explanation of the obscure text of his master, he was led into such frivolous distinctions, and tasteless propositions, that his works deserve inspection, as examples of the manner of a true mechanical critic.

This blunted feeling of the mechanical critic was at first concealed from the world in the pomp of critical erudition; but when he trusted to himself, and, destitute of taste and imagination, became a Poet and a Dramatist, the secret of the Royal Midas was revealed. As his evil temper prevailed, he forgot his learning, and lost the moderate sense which he seemed once to have possessed. Rage, malice, and dulness, were the heavy residuum; and now he much resembled that congenial soul whom the ever-witty South compared to the tailor's goose, which is at once hot and heavy.

Dennis was sent to Cambridge by his father, a saddler, who imagined a genius had been born in the family. He travelled in France and Italy, and on his return held in contempt every pursuit but poetry and criticism. He haunted the literary coteries, and dropped into a galaxy of wits and noblemen. At a time when our literature, like our politics, was divided into two factions, Dennis enlisted himself under Dryden and Congreve [1]; and, as legitimate criticism was then an awful novelty in the nation, the young critic, recent from the Stagirite, soon became an important, and even a tremendous spirit. Pope is said to have regarded his judgment, and Mallet, when young, tremblingly submitted a poem, to live or die by his breath. One would have imagined that the elegant studies he was cultivating, the views of life which had opened on him, and the polished circle around,

[1] See in Dennis's "Original Letters" one to Tonson, entitled, "On the conspiracy against the reputation of Mr. Dryden." It was in favour of *folly* against *wisdom*, *weakness* against *power*, etc.; *Pope* against *Dryden*. He closes with a well-turned period. "Wherever genius runs through a work, I forgive its faults; and wherever that is wanting, no beauties can touch me. Being struck by Mr. Dryden's genius, I have no eyes for his errors; and I have no eyes for his enemies' beauties, because I am not struck by their genius."

would have influenced the grossness which was the natural growth of the soil. But ungracious Nature kept fast hold of the mind of Dennis!

His personal manners were characterised by their abrupt violence. Once dining with Lord Halifax he became so impatient of contradiction, that he rushed out of the room, overthrowing the side-board. Inquiring on the next day how he had behaved, Moyle observed, "You went away like the devil, taking one corner of the house with you." The wits, perhaps, then began to suspect their young Zoilus's dogmatism.

The actors refused to perform one of his tragedies to empty houses, but they retained some excellent thunder which Dennis had invented; it rolled one night when Dennis was in the pit, and it was applauded! Suddenly starting up, he cried to the audience, "By G—, they won't act my tragedy, but they steal my thunder!" Thus when reading Pope's "Essay on Criticism," he came to the character of Appius, he suddenly flung down the new poem, exclaiming, "By G—, he means me!" He is painted to the life.

> "*Lo! Appius reddens* at each word you speak,
> And stares tremendous with a threatening eye,
> Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry."

I complete this picture of Dennis with a very extraordinary caricature, which Steele, in one of his papers of "The Theatre," has given of Dennis. I shall, however, disentangle the threads, and pick out what I consider not to be caricature, but resemblance.

"His motion is quick and sudden, turning on all sides, with a suspicion of every object, as if he had done or feared some extraordinary mischief. You see wickedness in his meaning, but folly of countenance, that betrays him to be unfit for the execution of it. He starts, stares, and looks round him. This constant shuffle of haste without speed, makes the man thought a little touched; but the vacant look of his two eyes gives you to understand, that he could never run out of his wits, which seemed not so much to be lost, as to want employment; they are not so much astray, as they are a wool-gathering. He has the face and surliness of a mastiff, which has often saved him from being treated like a cur, till some more sagacious than ordinary found his nature, and used him accordingly. Unhappy being! terrible without, fearful within! Not a wolf in sheep's clothing, but a sheep in a wolf's."

However anger may have a little coloured this portrait, its truth may be confirmed from a variety of sources. If Sallust, with his accustomed penetration, in characterising the violent

emotions of Catiline's restless mind, did not forget its indication in "his walk now quick and now slow," it may be allowed to think that the character of Dennis was alike to be detected in his habitual surliness.

Even in his old age, for our chain must not drop a link, his native brutality never forsook him. Thomson and Pope charitably supported the veteran Zoilus at a benefit play; and Savage, who had nothing but a verse to give, returned them very poetical thanks, in the name of Dennis. He was then blind and old, but his critical ferocity had no old age; his surliness overcame every grateful sense, and he swore as usual, "They could be no one's but that *fool* Savage's,"—an evidence of his sagacity and brutality [1]! This was, perhaps, the last peevish snuff shaken from the dismal link of criticism; for, a few days after, was the redoubted Dennis numbered with the mighty dead.

He carried the same fierceness into his style, and commits the same ludicrous extravagancies in literary composition as in his manners. Was Pope really sore at the Zoilian style? He has himself spared me the trouble of exhibiting Dennis's gross personalities, by having collected them at the close of the Dunciad; specimens which show how low false wit and malignity can get to by hard pains. I will throw into the note a curious illustration of the anti-poetical notions of a mechanical critic, who has no wing to dip into the hues of the imagination [2].

[1] There is an epigram on Dennis by Savage, which Johnson has preserved in his life; and I feel it to be a very correct likeness, although Johnson censures Savage for writing an epigram against Dennis, while he was living in great familiarity with the critic. Perhaps that was the happiest moment to write the epigram. The anecdote in the text doubtless prompted "the fool" to take this fair revenge and just chastisement. Savage has brought out the features strongly, in these touches—

> "Say what revenge on Dennis can be had,
> Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad.
> On one so poor you cannot take the law,
> On one so old your sword you scorn to draw.
> Uncaged then, let the harmless monster rage,
> Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age!"

[2] Dennis points his heavy cannon of criticism, and thus bombards that aerial edifice, the "Rape of the Lock." He is inquiring into the nature of *poetical machinery*, which he oracularly pronounces, should be religious, or allegorical, or political; asserting the "Lutrin" of Boileau to be a trifle only in appearance, covering the deep political design of reforming the Popish church!—With the yard of criticism, he takes measure of the slender graces and tiny elegance of Pope's aerial machines, as "less considerable than the *human persons*, which is *without precedent*. Nothing can be so contemptible as the *persons* or so foolish as the understandings of these *hobgoblins*. Ariel's speech is one continued impertinence. After he has talked to them of black omens and dire disasters that threaten his heroine, those bugbears dwindle to the breaking a piece of china, to staining a petticoat, the losing a fan, or a bottle of sal volatile—and what makes Ariel's speech more ridiculous is the *place* where it is spoken, on

In life and in literature we meet with men who seem endowed with an obliquity of understanding, yet active and busy spirits; but, as activity is only valuable in proportion to the capacity that puts all in motion, so, when ill directed, the intellect, warped by nature, only becomes more crooked and fantastical. A kind of frantic enthusiasm breaks forth in their actions and their language, and often they seem ferocious when they are only foolish. We may thus account for the manners and style of Dennis, pushed almost to the verge of insanity, and acting on him very much like insanity itself; a circumstance which the quick vengeance of wit seized on, in the humorous "Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris, concerning the Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis, an officer of the Custom-house."

It is curious to observe, that Dennis, in the definition of genius, describes himself; he says, "Genius is caused by a *furious joy* and *pride of soul* on the conception of an extraordinary hint. Many men have their *hints* without their motions of *fury and pride of soul,* because they want fire enough to agitate their spirits; and these we call cold writers. Others, who have a great deal of fire, but have not excellent organs, feel the forementioned *motions,* without the extraordinary *hints,* and these we call fustian writers." His *motions* and his *hints,* as he describes them, in regard to cold or fustian writers, seem to include the extreme points of his own genius.

Another feature strongly marks the race of the Dennises. With a half-consciousness of deficient genius, they usually idolise some chimera. by adopting some extravagant principle; and

the sails and cordage of Belinda's barge." And then he compares the Sylphs to the Discord of Homer, whose feet are upon the earth, and head in the skies. "They are, indeed, beings so diminutive that they bear the same proportion to the rest of the intellectual, that *Eels in vinegar* do to the rest of the material world; the latter are only to be seen through microscopes, and the former only through the false optics of a Rosicrucian understanding." And finally, he decides that "these diminutive beings are only *Sawney* (that is, Alexander Pope), taking the change; for it is he, a little lump of flesh that talks, instead of a little spirit." Dennis's profound gravity contributes an additional feature of the burlesque to these heroi-comic poems themselves, only that Dennis cannot be playful, and will not be good-humoured.

On the same tasteless principle he decides on the improbability of that incident in the "Conscious Lovers" of Steele, raised by Bevil, who having received great obligations from his father, has promised not to marry without his consent. On this Dennis, who rarely in his critical progress will stir a foot without authority, quotes four formidable pages from Locke's "Essay on Government," to prove that, at the age of discretion, a man is free to dispose of his own actions! One would imagine that Dennis was arguing like a special pleader, rather than developing the involved action of an affecting drama. Are there critics who would pronounce Dennis to be a very *sensible* brother? It is here too he calls Steele "a two-penny author," alluding to the price of the "Tatlers"—but this cost Dennis dear!

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Dennis had ever some misshapen idol of the mind, which he was perpetually caressing with the zeal of perverted judgment or monstrous taste. Once his frenzy ran against the Italian Opera; and in his "Essay on Public Spirit," he ascribes its decline to its unmanly warblings. I have seen a long letter by Dennis to the Earl of Oxford, written to congratulate his lordship on his accession to power, and the high hopes of the nation; but the greater part of the letter runs on the Italian Opera, while Dennis instructs the Minister that the national prosperity can never be effected while this general corruption of the three kingdoms lies open!

Dennis has more than once recorded two material circumstances in the life of a true critic; these are his *ill-nature* and the *public neglect*.

"I make no doubt," says he, "that upon perusal of the critical part of these letters, the *old accusation* will be brought against me, and there will be a *fresh outcry* among thoughtless people that I am *an ill-natured man*."

He entertained exalted opinions of his own powers, and he deeply felt their public neglect.

"While others," he says in his tracts, "have been *too much encouraged*, I have been *too much neglected*"—his favourite system, that religion gives principally to great poetry its spirit and enthusiasm, was an important point, which, he says, "has been left to be treated by *a person who has the honour of being your lordship's countryman*—your lordship knows, that persons *so much and so long oppressed as I have been*, have been always allowed to *say things concerning themselves* which in others might be offensive."

His vanity, we see, was equal to his vexation, and, as he grew old, he became more enraged; and, writing too often without Aristotle or Locke by his side, he gave the town pure Dennis, and almost ceased to be read. "The oppression," of which he complains, might not be less imaginary than his alarm, while a treaty was pending with France, that he should be delivered up to the Grand Monarque for having written a tragedy, which no one could read, against his majesty.

It is melancholy, but it is useful, to record the mortifications of such authors. Dennis had, no doubt, laboured with zeal which could never meet a reward, and, perhaps, amid his critical labours, he turned often with an aching heart, from their barren contemplation to that of the tranquillity he might have derived from an humbler avocation.

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lising the habits and inflaming the style of Dennis. He had thrown himself among the walks of genius, and aspired to fix himself on a throne to which Nature had refused him a legitimate claim. What a lasting source of vexation and rage, even for a long-lived patriarch of criticism!

Accustomed to suspend the scourge over the heads of the first authors of the age, he could not sit at a table, or enter a coffee-house, without exerting the despotism of a literary dictator. How could the mind, that had devoted itself to the contemplation of master-pieces only to reward its industry by detailing to the public their human frailties, experience one hour of amenity, one idea of grace, one generous impulse of sensibility?

But the poor critic himself at length fell, really more the victim of his criticisms than the genius he had insulted. Having incurred the public neglect, the blind and helpless Cacus in his den sunk fast into contempt, dragged on a life of misery, and in his last days, scarcely vomiting his fire and smoke, became the most pitiable creature, receiving the alms he craved from triumphant genius.

DISAPPOINTED GENIUS

TAKES A FATAL DIRECTION BY ITS ABUSE.

How the moral and literary character are reciprocally influenced, may be traced in the character of a personage peculiarly apposite to these inquiries. This worthy of literature is ORATOR HENLEY—who is rather known traditionally than historically [1]. He is so overwhelmed with the echoed satire of Pope, and his own extravagant conduct for many years, that I should not care to extricate him, had I not discovered a feature in the character of Henley not yet drawn, and constituting no inferior calamity among authors.

Henley stands in his "gilt tub" in the Dunciad; and a portrait of him hangs in the picture-gallery of the Commentary. Pope's verse and Warburton's notes are the pickle and the ban-

[1] So little is known of this singular man, that Mr. Dibdin, in his very curious "Bibliomania," was not able to recollect any other details than those he transcribed from Warburton's "Commentatory on the Dunciad." In Mr. Nichols's "History of Leicestershire," a more copious account of Henley may be found: to their facts something is here added. It was, however, difficult to glean after so excellent a harvest-home. To the author of the "Life of Bowyer," and other works devoted to our authors, our literary history is more indebted, than to the labours of any other contemporary. He is the Prosper Marchand of English literature.

dages for any Egyptian mummy of dulness, who will last as long as the pyramid that incloses him. I shall transcribe for the reader's convenience the lines of Pope :—

> "Embrown'd with native bronze, lo! Henley stands,
> Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands;
> How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue!
> How sweet the periods, neither said nor sung!
> Still break the benches, Henley, with thy strain,
> While Sherlock, Hare, and Gibson, preach in vain.
> Oh! great restorer of the good old stage,
> Preacher at once, and Zany of thy age[1]!"

It will surprise when I declare that this buffoon was an indefatigable student, a proficient in all the learned languages, an elegant poet, and, withal, a wit of no inferior class. It remains to discover why "the Preacher" became "the Zany."

Henley was of St. John's College, Cambridge, and was distinguished for the ardour and pertinacity of his studies; he gave evident marks of genius. There is a letter of his to the Spectator, signed *Peter de Quir,* which abounds with local wit and quaint humour. He had not attained his twenty-second year when he published a poem, entitled "Esther, Queen of Persia[2]," written amid graver studies; for three years after, Henley being M. A. published his "Complete Linguist," consisting of grammars of ten languages.

The poem itself must not be passed by in silent notice. It is preceded by a learned preface, in which the poet discovers his intimate knowledge of oriental studies, with some etymologies from the Persic, the Hebrew, and the Greek, concerning the name and person of Ahasuerus, whom he makes to be Xerxes. The close of this preface gives another unexpected feature in the character of him who, the poet tells us, was "embrowned with *native* bronze,"—an unaffected modesty! Henley, alluding to a Greek paraphrase of Barnes, censures his faults without acrimony, and even apologises for them, by thus gracefully closing the preface: "These can only be alleviated by one plea, the youth of the author, which is a circumstance I hope the candid will consider in favour of the present writer!"

The poem is not destitute of imagination and harmony.

The pomp of the feast of Ahasuerus has all the luxuriance of Asiatic splendour; and the circumstances are selected with some fancy.

[1] It is, perhaps, unnecessary to point out this allusion of Pope to our ancient *mysteries*, where the *Clergy* were the *actors*; among which, the *Vice* or *Punch* was introduced.

[2] The title is, "Esther, Queen of Persia, an historical Poem, in four books; by John Henley, B. A. of St. John's College, Cambridge. 1714."

" The higher guests approach a room of state,
Where tissued couches all around were set
Labour'd with art; o'er ivory tables thrown,
Embroider'd carpets fell in folds adown.
The bowers and gardens of the court were near,
And open lights indulged the breathing air.
" Pillars of marble bore a silken sky,
While cords of purple and fine linen tie
In silver rings, the azure canopy.
Distinct with diamond stars the blue was seen,
And earth and seas were feign'd in emerald green;
A globe of gold, ray'd with a pointed crown,
Form'd in the midst almost a real sun."

Nor is Henley less skilful in the elegance of his sentiments, and in his development of the human character. When Esther is raised to the throne the poet says,

" And Esther, though in robes, is Esther still."

And then sublimely exclaims,

" The heroic soul, amidst its bliss or woe,
Is never swell'd too high, nor sunk too low;
Stands, like its origin above the skies,
Ever the same great self, sedately wise;
Collected and prepared in every stage
To scorn a courting world, or bear its rage."

But wit which the Spectator has sent down to posterity, and poetry which gave the promise of excellence, did not bound the noble ambition of Henley; ardent in more important labours, he was perfecting himself in the learned languages, and carrying on a correspondence with eminent scholars.

He officiated as the master of the free-school at his native town in Leicestershire, then in a declining state; but he introduced many original improvements. He established a class for public elocutions, recitation of the classics, orations, etc.; and arranged a method of enabling every scholar to give an account of his studies without the necessity of consulting others, or of being examined by particular questions. These miracles are indeed a little apocryphal; for they are drawn from that pseudo-gospel of his life, of which I am inclined to think he himself was the evangelist. His grammar of ten languages was now finished; and his genius felt that obscure spot too circumscribed for his ambition. He parted from the inhabitants with their regrets; and came to the metropolis with thirty recommendatory letters.

Henley probably had formed those warm conceptions of patronage in which youthful genius cradles its hopes. Till 1724 he appears, however, to have obtained only a small living, and to have existed by translating and writing. Thus, after perse-

vering studies, many successful literary efforts, and much heavy task-work, Henley found he was but a hireling author for the booksellers, and a salaried "Hyp-doctor" for the minister; for he received a stipend for this periodical paper, which was to cheer the spirits of the people by ridiculing the gloomy forebodings of Amhurst's "Craftsman." About this time the complete metamorphosis of the studious and ingenious John Henley began to branch out into its grotesque figure; and a curiosity in human nature was now about to be opened to public inspection. "The Preacher" was to personate "The Zany." His temper had become brutal, and he had gradually contracted a ferocity and grossness in his manners, which seem by no means to have been indicated in his purer days. — His youth was disgraced by no irregularities — it was studious and honourable. But he was now quick at vilifying the greatest characters, and, having a perfect contempt for all mankind, was resolved to live by making one half of the world laugh at the other. Such is the direction which disappointed genius has too often given to its talents.

He first affected oratory, and something of a theatrical attitude, in his sermons, which greatly attracted the populace; and he startled those preachers who had so long dozed over their own sermons, and who now finding themselves with but few slumberers about them, envied their Ciceronian brother,

> "Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands."

It was alleged against Henley, that "he drew the people too much from their parish churches, and was not so proper for a London Divine as a rural Pastor." He was offered a rustication, on a better living; but Henley did not come from the country to return to it.

There is a narrative of the life of Henley, which, subscribed by another person's name, he himself inserted in his "Oratory Transactions." As he had to publish himself this highly-seasoned biographical morsel, and as his face was then beginning to be "embrowned with bronze," he thus very impudently and very ingeniously apologises for the panegyric:—

"If any remark of the writer appears favourable to myself, and be judged apocryphal, it may, however, weigh in the opposite scale to some things less obligingly said of me; false praise being as pardonable as false reproach [1]."

[1] This narrative is subscribed A. Welstede. Warburton maliciously quotes it as a life of Henley, written by Welsted—doubtless designed to lower the writer of that name, and one of the heroes of the Dunciad. The public have long been deceived by this artifice: the effect, I believe, of Warburton's dishonesty.

In this narrative we are told, that when at college—

"He began to be uneasy that he had not the liberty of thinking, without incurring the scandal of heterodoxy; he was impatient that systems of all sorts were put into his hands ready carved out for him; it shocked him to find that he was commanded to believe against his judgment, and resolved some time or other to enter his protest against any person being bred like a slave, who is born an Englishman."

This is all very decorous, and nothing can be objected to the first cry of this reforming patriot, but a reasonable suspicion of its truth. If these sentiments were really in his mind at college, he deserves at least the praise of retention; for fifteen years were suffered to pass quietly without the patriotic volcano giving even a distant rumbling of the sulphureous matter concealed beneath. All that time had passed in the contemplation of church preferment, with the aerial perspective lighted by a visionary mitre. But Henley grew indignant at his disappointments, and suddenly resolved to reform "the gross impostures and faults that have long prevailed in the received *institutions* and *establishments* of *knowledge* and *religion*"—simply meaning that he wished to pull down the *Church* and the *University!*

But he was prudent before he was patriotic; he at first grafted himself on Whiston, adopting his opinions; and sent some queries by which it appears that Henley, previous to breaking with the church, was anxious to learn the power it had to punish him. The Arian Whiston was himself, from pure motives, suffering expulsion from Cambridge—for refusing his subscription to the Athanasian Creed; he was a pious man, and no buffoon, but a little crazed. Whiston afterwards discovered the character of his correspondent, he then requested the Bishop of London

"To summon Mr. Henley, the orator, whose vile history I knew so well, to come and tell it to the church. But the bishop said he could do nothing; since which time Mr. Henley has gone on for about twenty years without control every week, as an ecclesiastical mountebank, to abuse religion."

The most extraordinary project was now formed by Henley; he was to teach mankind universal knowledge from his lectures, and primitive Christianity from his sermons. He took apartments in Newport-market, and opened his "Oratory." He declared,

"He would teach more in one year than schools and universities did in five; and write and study twelve hours a day, and yet appear as untouched by the yoke, as if he never bore it."

In his "Idea of what is intended to be taught in the *Weekdays' Universal Academy*," we may admire the fertility, and sometimes the grandeur of his views. His lectures and ora-

tions [1] are of a very different nature from what they are imagined to be; literary topics are treated with perspicuity and with erudition, and there is something original in the manner. They were, no doubt, larded and stuffed with many high-seasoned jokes, which Henley did not send to the printer.

Henley was a charlatan and a knave; but in all his charlatanerie and his knavery he indulged the reveries of genius; many of which have been realised since; and, if we continue to laugh at Henley, it will indeed be cruel, for we shall be laughing at ourselves! Among the objects which Henley discriminates in his general design, were, to supply the want of a university, or universal school, in this capital, for persons of all ranks, professions, and capacities;—to encourage a literary correspondence with great men and learned bodies; the communication of all discoveries and experiments in science and the arts; to form an amicable society for the encouragement of learning, "in order to cultivate, adorn, and exalt the genius of Britain;" to lay a foundation for an English Academy; to give a standard to our language, and a digest to our history; to revive the an-

[1] Every lecture is dedicated to some branch of the Royal Family. Among them one is on "University Learning," an attack.—"On the English History and Historians," extremely curious.—"On the Languages, Ancient and Modern," full of erudition.—"On the English Tongue," a valuable criticism at that moment when our style was receiving a new polish from Addison and Prior. Henley, acknowledging that these writers had raised *correctness* of expression to its utmost height, adds, though, "if I mistake not, something to the detriment of that *force* and *freedom* that ought, with the most concealed art, to be a perfect copy of nature, in all compositions." This is among the first notices of that artificial style which has vitiated our native idiom, substituting for its purity an affected delicacy, and for its vigour profuse ornament. Henley observes that, "to be perspicuous, pure, elegant, copious, and harmonious, are the chief good qualities of writing the English tongue; they are attained by study and practice, and lost by the contrary: but *imitation* is to be avoided; they cannot be made our own but by keeping the force of our understandings superior to our models; by *rendering our thoughts the original, and our words the copy.*"—"On Wit and Imagination," abounding with excellent criticism.—"On grave conundrums and serious buffoons, in defence of burlesque discourses, from the most weighty authorities."—"A Dissertation upon Nonsense." At the close he has a fling at his friend Pope; it was after the publication of the Dunciad. "Of Nonsense there are celebrated professors; Mr. Pope grows witty like Bays in the 'Rehearsal,' by selling bargains (his subscriptions for Homer), praising himself, laughing at his joke, and making his own works the test of any man's criticism; but he seems to be in some jeopardy; for the ghost of Homer has lately spoke to him in Greek, and Shakespeare resolves to bring him, as he has brought Shakespeare, to a tragical conclusion. Mr. Pope suggests the last choice of a subject for writing a book, by making the *Nonsense* of others his argument; while his own puts it out of any writer's power to confute him." In another fling at Pope, he gives the reason why Mr. Pope adds the dirty dialect to that of the water, and is in love with the Nymphs of Fleet-ditch; and in a lecture on the spleen, he announced "an anatomical discovery, that Mr. Pope's spleen is bigger than his head!"

cient schools of philosophy and elocution, which last has been reckoned by Pancirollus among the *artes perditæ*. All these were "to bring all the parts of knowledge into the narrowest compass, placing them in the clearest light, and fixing them to the utmost certainty." The religion of the Oratory was to be that of the primitive Church in the first ages of the four first general councils, approved by parliament in the first year of the reign of Elizabeth. "The Church of England is really with us; we appeal to her own principles, and we shall not deviate from her, unless she deviates from herself." Yet his "Primitive Christianity" had all the sumptuous pomp of popery; his creeds and doxologies are printed in the red letter, and his liturgies in the black; his pulpit blazed in gold and velvet (Pope's "gilt tub"); while his "Primitive Eucharist" was to be distributed with all the ancient forms of celebrating the sacrifice of the altar, which he says, "are so noble, so just, sublime, and perfectly harmonious, that the change has been made to an unspeakable disadvantage." It was restoring the decorations and the mummery of the mass! He assumed even a higher tone, and dispersed medals, like those of Louis XIV., with the device of a sun near the meridian, and a motto, *Ad summa*, with an inscription expressive of the genius of this new adventurer, *Inveniam viam aut faciam!* There was a snake in the grass; it is obvious that Henley, in improving literature and philosophy, had a deeper design—to set up a new sect! He called himself "a Rationalist," and on his death-bed repeatedly cried out, "Let my notorious enemies know I die a Rational[1]."

His address to the town[2] excited public curiosity to the utmost; and the floating crowds were repulsed by their own violence from this new paradise, where "The Tree of Knowledge" was said to be planted. At the succeeding meeting "the Restorer of Ancient Eloquence" informed "persons in chairs that they must come sooner." He first commenced by subscriptions to be raised from "Persons eminent in Arts and Literature," who, it seems, were lured by the seductive promise, that, "if they had been virtuous or penitents, they should be commemorated;" an oblique hint at a panegyrical puff. In the decline of his popularity he permitted his doorkeeper, whom he dignifies with the title of *Ostiary*, to take a shilling! But he seems to have been popular for many years; even when his auditors were but few, they were of the better order[3]; and in notes

[1] Thus he anticipated the term, since become so notorious among German theologians.

[2] It is preserved in "The Historical Register," vol. xi. for 1726. It is curious and well written.

[3] Gent. Mag. vol. lvii. p. 876.

respecting him which I have seen, by a contemporary, he is called "the reverend and learned." His favourite character was that of a Restorer of Eloquence; and he was not destitute of the qualifications of a fine orator, a good voice, graceful gestures, and forcible elocution. Warburton justly remarked, "Sometimes he broke jests, and sometimes that bread which he called the Primitive Eucharist." He would degenerate into buffoonery on solemn occasions. His address to the Deity was at first awful, and seemingly devout; but, once expatiating on the several sects who would certainly be damned, he prayed that the Dutch might be *undamm'd*! He undertook to show the ancient use of the petticoat, by quoting the Scriptures where the mother of Samuel is said to have made him "*a little coat*," ergo, a PETTI-*coat*[1]! His advertisements were mysterious ribaldry to attract curiosity, while his own good sense would frequently chastise those who could not resist it; his auditors came in folly, but they departed in good-humour[2]. The advertisements were usually preceded by a sort of motto, generally a sarcastic allusion to some public transaction of the preceding

[1] His "Defence of the Oratory" is a curious performance. He pretends to derive his own from great authority. "St. Paul is related, Acts 28, to have dwelt *two whole years in his own hired house*, and to have received all that came in unto him, teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. This was at *Rome*, and doubtless was his practice in his other travels, there being the same reason in the thing to produce elsewhere the like circumstances." He proceeds to show "the calumnies and reproaches, and the novelty and impiety, with which Christianity, at its first setting out, was charged, as a mean, abject institution, not only useless and unserviceable, but pernicious to the public and its professors, as the refuse of the world."—Of the false accusations raised against Jesus—all this he applies to himself and his oratory—and he concludes, that "Bringing men to think rightly will always be reckoned a depraving of their minds by those who are desirous to keep them in a mistake, and who measure all truth by the standard of their own narrow opinions, views, and passions. The principles of this institution are those of right reason; the first ages of Christianity; true facts, clear criticism, and polite literature—if these corrupt the mind, to find a place where the mind will not be corrupted, will be impracticable." Thus speciously could "the Orator" reason, raising himself to the height of apostolical purity. And, when he was accused that he *did all for lucre*, he retorted, that "some *do nothing* for it;" and that "he preached more charity sermons than any clergyman in the kingdom."

[2] He once advertised an oration on marriage, which drew together an overflowing assembly of females at which, solemnly shaking his head, he told the ladies, that "he was afraid, that oftentimes, as well as now, they came to church in hopes to get husbands, rather than be instructed by the preacher;" to which he added a piece of wit, not quite decent. He congregated the trade of shoemakers, by offering to show the most expeditious method of making shoes: he held out a boot, and cut off the leg part. He gave a lecture, which he advertised was "for the instruction of those who did not like it; it was on the philosophy, history, and great use of *Nonsense* to the learned, political, and polite world, who excel in it."

In life and in literature we meet with men who seem endowed with an obliquity of understanding, yet active and busy spirits; but, as activity is only valuable in proportion to the capacity that puts all in motion, so, when ill directed, the intellect, warped by nature, only becomes more crooked and fantastical. A kind of frantic enthusiasm breaks forth in their actions and their language, and often they seem ferocious when they are only foolish. We may thus account for the manners and style of Dennis, pushed almost to the verge of insanity, and acting on him very much like insanity itself; a circumstance which the quick vengeance of wit seized on, in the humorous "Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris, concerning the Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis, an officer of the Custom-house."

It is curious to observe, that Dennis, in the definition of genius, describes himself; he says, "Genius is caused by a *furious joy* and *pride of soul* on the conception of an extraordinary hint. Many men have their *hints* without their motions of *fury and pride of soul,* because they want fire enough to agitate their spirits; and these we call cold writers. Others, who have a great deal of fire, but have not excellent organs, feel the forementioned *motions,* without the extraordinary *hints,* and these we call fustian writers." His *motions* and his *hints,* as he describes them, in regard to cold or fustian writers, seem to include the extreme points of his own genius.

Another feature strongly marks the race of the Dennises. With a half-consciousness of deficient genius, they usually idolise some chimera. by adopting some extravagant principle; and

the sails and cordage of Belinda's barge." And then he compares the Sylphs to the Discord of Homer, whose feet are upon the earth, and head in the skies. "They are, indeed, beings so diminutive that they bear the same proportion to the rest of the intellectual, that *Eels in vinegar* do to the rest of the material world; the latter are only to be seen through microscopes, and the former only through the false optics of a Rosicrucian understanding." And finally, he decides that "these diminutive beings are only *Sawney* (that is, Alexander Pope), taking the change; for it is he, a little lump of flesh that talks, instead of a little spirit." Dennis's profound gravity contributes an additional feature of the burlesque to these heroi-comic poems themselves, only that Dennis cannot be playful, and will not be good-humoured.

On the same tasteless principle he decides on the improbability of that incident in the "Conscious Lovers" of Steele, raised by Bevil, who having received great obligations from his father, has promised not to marry without his consent. On this Dennis, who rarely in his critical progress will stir a foot without authority, quotes four formidable pages from Locke's "Essay on Government," to prove that, at the age of discretion, a man is free to dispose of his own actions! One would imagine that Dennis was arguing like a special pleader, rather than developing the involved action of an affecting drama. Are there critics who would pronounce Dennis to be a very *sensible* brother? It is here too he calls Steele "a two-penny author," alluding to the price of the "Tatlers"—but this cost Dennis dear!

of "Courayer and others, the D— of W—n, the Protestantism of the P—, the conversion of the Rev. Mr. B—e, and Mr. Har—y," he closes with "Origen's opinion of Satan's conversion; with the choice and balance of Religion in all countries."

There is one remarkable entry:—

"Feb. 11. This week, all Mr. Henley's writings were seized, to be examined by the State. *Vide Magnam Chartam,* and *Eng. Lib.*"

It is evident by what follows that the *personalities* he made use of, were one means of attracting auditors.

"On the action of Cicero, and the beauty of Eloquence, and on living characters; of action in the Senate, at the Bar, and in the Pulpit—of the Theatrical in all men. The manner of my Lord —, Sir —, Dr. —, the B. of —, being a proof how all life is playing something, but with different action."

In a Lecture on the History of Bookcraft, an account was given

"Of the plenty of books, and dearth of sense; the advantages of the Oratory to the booksellers, in advertising for them; and to their customers, in making books useless; with all the learning, reason, and wit, more than are proper for one advertisement."

Amid these eccentricities it is remarkable, that "the Zany" never forsook his studies; and the amazing multiplicity of the MSS. he left behind him, confirm this extraordinary fact. "These," he says, "are six thousand more or less, that I value at one guinea apiece; with 150 volumes of common places of wit, memoranda," etc. They were sold for much less than one hundred pounds; I have looked over many; they are written with great care. Every leaf has an opposite blank page, probably left for additions or corrections, so that if his nonsense were spontaneous, his sense was the fruit of study and correction.

Such was "Orator Henley!" A scholar of great acquirements, and of no mean genius; hardy and inventive, eloquent and witty; he might have been an ornament to literature, which he made ridiculous; and the pride of the pulpit, which he so egregiously disgraced; but, having blunted and worn out that interior feeling, which is the instinct of the good man, and the wisdom of the wise, there was no balance in his passions, and the decorum of life was sacrificed to its selfishness. He condescended to live on the follies of the people, and his sordid nature had changed him till he crept, "licking the dust with the serpent."

THE MALADIES OF AUTHORS.

THE practice of every art subjects the artist to some particular inconvenience, usually inflicting some malady on that member which has been over-wrought by excess: nature abused, pursues man into his most secret corners, and avenges herself. In the athletic exercises of the ancient Gymnasium, the pugilists were observed to become lean from their hips downwards, while the superior parts of their bodies, which they over-exercised, were prodigiously swollen; on the contrary, the racers were meagre upwards, while their feet acquired an unnatural dimension. The secret source of life seems to be carried forwards to those parts which are making the most continued efforts.

In all sedentary labours, some particular malady is contracted by every worker, derived from particular postures of the body and peculiar habits. Thus the weaver, the tailor, the painter, and the glass-blower, have all their respective maladies. The diamond-cutter, with a furnace before him, may be said almost to live in one; the slightest air must be shut out of the apartment, lest it scatter away the precious dust—a breath would ruin him!

The analogy is obvious[1]; and the author must participate in the common fate of all sedentary occupations. But his maladies, from the very nature of the delicate organ of thinking, intensely exercised, are more terrible than those of any other profession; they are more complicated, more hidden in their causes, and the mysterious union and secret influence of the faculties of the soul over those of the body, are visible, yet still incomprehensible; they frequently produce a perturbation in the faculties, a state of acute irritability, and many sorrows and infirmities, which are not likely to create much sympathy from those around the author, who, at a glance, could have discovered where the pugilist or the racer became meagre or monstrous: the intellectual malady eludes even the tenderness of friendship.

The more obvious maladies engendered by the life of a student arise from over-study. These have furnished a curious volume to Tissot, in his treatise "On the Health of Men of Letters;" a book, however, which chills and terrifies more than it does good.

[1] Hawkesworth, in the second paper of the Adventurer, has composed, from his own feelings, an elegant description of intellectual and corporeal labour, and the sufferings of an author, with the uncertainty of his labour and his reward.

The unnatural fixed postures, the perpetual activity of the mind, and the inaction of the body; the brain exhausted with assiduous toil deranging the nerves, vitiating the digestive powers, disordering its own machinery, and breaking the calm of sleep by that previous state of excitement which study throws us into, are some of the calamities of a studious life: for like the ocean, when its swell is subsiding, the waves of the mind too still heave and beat; hence all the small feverish symptoms, and the whole train of hypochondriac affections, as well as some acute ones[1].

Among the correspondents of the poets Hughes and Thomson, there is a pathetic letter from a student. Alexander Bayne, to prepare his lectures, studied fourteen hours a day for eight months successively, and wrote 1600 sheets. Such intense application, which, however, not greatly exceeds that of many authors, brought on the bodily complaints he has minutely described, with "all the dispiriting symptoms of a nervous illness, commonly called vapours, or lowness of spirits." Bayne, who

[1] Dr. Fuller's "Medicina Gymnastica, or, a treatise concerning the power of Exercise, with respect to the Animal OEconomy, fifth edition,, 1718," is useful to remind the student of what he is apt to forget; for the object of this volume is to *substitute exercise for medicine*. He wrote the book befor he became a physician. He considers horse-riding as the best and noblest of all exercises, it being "a mixt exercise, partly active and partly passive, while other sorts, such as walking, running, stooping, or the like, require some labour and more strength for their performance." Cheyne, in his well-known treatise of "The English Malady," published about twenty years after Fuller's work, acknowledges that riding on horseback is the best of all exercises, for which he details his reasons. "Walking," he says, "though it will answer the same end, yet is it more laborious and tiresome;" but amusement ought always to be combined with the exercise of a student; the mind will receive no refreshment by a solitary walk or ride, unless it be agreeably withdrawn from all thoughtfulness and anxiety; if it continue studying in its recreations, it is the sure means of obtaining neither of its objects—a friend, not an author, will at such a moment be the better companion.

The last chapter in Fuller's work contains much curious reading on the ancient physicians, and their gymnastic courses, which Asclepiades, the pleasantest of all the ancient physicians, greatly studied; he was most fortunate in the invention of exercises to supply the place of much physic, and (says Fuller) no man in any age ever had the happiness to obtain so general an applause; Pliny calls him the delight of mankind. Admirable physician, who had so many ways, it appears, to make physic agreeable! He invented the *lecti pensiles*, or hanging beds, that the sick might be rocked to sleep; which took so much at that time, that they became a great luxury among the Romans.

Fuller judiciously does not recommend the gymnastic courses, because horse-riding, for persons of delicate constitutions, is preferable; he discovers too the reason why the ancients did not introduce this mode of exercise—it arose from the simple circumstance of their not knowing the use of stirrups, which was a later invention. Riding with the ancients was, therefore, only an exercise for the healthy and the robust; a horse without stirrups was a formidable animal for a valetudinarian.

was of an athletic temperament, imagined he had not paid attention to his diet, to the lowness of his desk, and his habit of sitting with a particular compression of the body;—in future, all these were to be avoided. He prolonged his life for five years; and, perhaps, was still flattering his hopes with sharing, one day, in the literary celebrity of his friends, when, to use his words, "the same illness made a fierce attack upon me again, and has kept me in a very bad state of inactivity and disrelish of all my ordinary amusements:" those *amusements* were his serious *studies*. There is a fascination in literary labour: the student feeds on magical drugs; to withdraw him from them requires nothing less than that greater magic, which could break his own spells. A few months after this letter was written, Bayne died on the way to Bath, a martyr to his studies.

The excessive labour on a voluminous work, which occupies a long life, leaves the student with a broken constitution, and his sight decayed or lost. The most admirable observer of mankind, and the truest painter of the human heart, declares, "The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the *mind that museth on many things*." Of this class was old Randle Cotgrave, the curious collector of the most copious dictionary of old French and old English words and phrases. The work is the only treasury of our genuine idiom. Even this labour of the lexicographer, so copious and so elaborate, must have been projected with rapture, and pursued with pleasure, till, in the progress, "the mind was musing on many things." Then came the melancholy doubt, that drops mildew from its enveloping wings over the voluminous labour of a laborious author, whether he be wisely consuming his days, and not perpetually neglecting some higher duties, or some happier amusements. Still the enchanted delver sighs, and strikes on, in the glimmering mine of hope. If he live to complete the great labour, it is, perhaps, reserved for the applause of the next age; for, as our great lexicographer exclaimed, "In this gloom of solitude I have protracted my work, till those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds;" but, if it be applauded in his own, that praise has come too late for him whose literary labour has stolen away his sight. Cotgrave had grown blind over his dictionary, and was doubtful whether this work of his laborious days and nightly vigils was not a superfluous labour, and nothing, after all, but a "poor bundle of words." The reader may listen to the gray-headed martyr, addressing his patron, Lord Burghley:

"I present to your lordship an account of the *expense of many hours*, which, in your service, and to mine own benefit,

might have been otherwise employed. My desires have aimed at more substantial marks; but *mine eyes* failed them, and forced me to *spend out their vigour in this bundle of words,* which may be unworthy of your lordship's great patience, and, perhaps, *ill-suited to the expectation of others.*"

A great number of young authors have died of over-study. An intellectual enthusiasm, accompanied by constitutional delicacy, has swept away half the rising genius of the age. Curious calculators have affected to discover the average number of infants who die under the age of five years: had they investigated those of the children of genius who perish before their thirtieth year, we should not be less amazed at this waste of man. There are few scenes more afflicting, nor which more deeply engage our sympathy, than that of a youth, glowing with the devotion of study, and resolute to distinguish his name among his countrymen, while death is stealing on him, touching with premature age, before he strikes the last blow. The author perishes on the very pages which give a charm to his existence. The fine taste and tender melancholy of Headley, the fervid genius of Henry Kirke White, will not easily pass away; but how many youths as noble-minded have not had the fortune of Kirke White to be commemorated by genius, and have perished without their fame! Henry Wharton is a name well known to the student of English literature; he published historical criticisms of high value; and he left, as some of the fruits of his studies, sixteen volumes of MSS., preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth. These great labours were pursued with the ardour that only could have produced them; the author had not exceeded his thirtieth year, when he sank under his continued studies, and perished a martyr to literature. Our literary history abounds with instances of the sad effects of an over-indulgence in study: that agreeable writer, Howel, had nearly lost his life by an excess of this nature, studying through long nights in the depth of winter. This severe study occasioned an imposthume in his head; he was eighteen days without sleep; and the illness was attended with many other afflicting symptoms. The eager diligence of Blackmore, protracting his studies through the night, broke his health, and obliged him to fly to a country retreat. Harris, the historian, died of a consumption by midnight studies, as his friend Hollis mentions. I shall add a recent instance, which I myself witnessed: it is that of John Macdiarmid. He was one of those Scotch students whom the golden fame of Hume and Robertson attracted to the metropolis. He mounted the first steps of literary adventure with credit; and passed through the probation of editor and reviewer, till he strove for more heroic adventures. He published some volumes, whose

subjects display the aspirings of his genius: "An Inquiry into the Nature of Civil and Military Subordination;" another into "the System of Military Defence." It was during these labours I beheld this inquirer, of a tender frame, emaciated, and study-worn, with hollow eyes, where the mind dimly shone like a lamp in a tomb. With keen ardour he opened a new plan of biographical politics. When, by one who wished the author was in better condition, the dangers of excess in study were brought to his recollection, he smiled, and, with something of a mysterious air, talked of unalterable confidence in the powers of his mind; of the indefinite improvement in our faculties; and, with this enfeebled frame, considered himself capable of continuous labour. His whole life, indeed, was one melancholy trial. Often the day cheerfully passed without its meal, but never without its page. The new system of political biography was advancing, when our young author felt a paralytic stroke. He afterwards resumed his pen; and a second one proved fatal. He lived just to pass through the press his "Lives of British Statesmen," a splendid quarto, whose publication he owed to the generous temper of a friend, who, when the author could not readily procure a publisher, would not see the dying author's last hope disappointed. Some research and reflection are combined in this literary and civil history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but it was written with the blood of the author, for Macdiarmid died of over-study and exhaustion.

Among the maladies of poor authors who procure a precarious existence by their pen, one, not the least considerable, is their old age; their flower and maturity of life were shed for no human comforts; and old age is the withered root. The late THOMAS MORTIMER, the compiler, among other things, of that useful work, "The Student's Pocket Dictionary," felt this severely—he himself experienced no abatement of his ardour, nor deficiency in his intellectual powers, at near the age of eighty;—but he then would complain "of the paucity of literary employment, and the preference given to young adventurers." Such is the *youth,* and such the *old age* of ordinary authors!

LITERARY SCOTCHMEN.

What literary emigrations from the North, of young men of genius, seduced by a romantic passion for literary fame, and lured by the golden prospects which the happier genius of some of their own countrymen opened on them! A volume might be written on literary Scotchmen, who have perished immaturely in this metropolis; little known, and slightly connected, they have dropped away among us, and scarcely left a vestige in the wrecks of their genius. Among them some authors may be discovered who might have ranked, perhaps, in the first classes of our literature. I shall select four out of as many hundred, who were not entirely unknown to me; a romantic youth—a man of genius—a brilliant prose writer—and a labourer in literature.

Isaac Ritson (not the poetical antiquary) was a young man of genius, who perished immaturely in this metropolis by attempting to exist by the efforts of his pen.

In early youth he roved among his native mountains, with the battles of Homer in his head, and his bow and arrow in his hand; in calmer hours, he nearly completed a spirited version of Hesiod, which constantly occupied his after-studies; yet our minstrel-archer did not less love the severer sciences.

Selected at length to rise to the eminent station of the Village School-master,—from the thankless office of pouring cold rudiments into heedless ears Ritson took a poetical flight. It was among the mountains and wild scenery of Scotland, that our young Homer, picking up fragments of heroic songs, and composing some fine ballad poetry, would, in his wanderings, recite them with such passionate expression, that he never failed of auditors; and found even the poor generous, when their better passions were moved. Thus he lived, like some old troubadour, by his rhymes, and his chants, and his virelays; and, after a year's absence, our bard returned in the triumph of verse. This was the most seducing moment of life; Ritson felt himself a laureated Petrarch; but he had now quitted his untutored but feeling admirers; and the child of fancy was to mix with the everyday business of life.

At Edinburgh he studied medicine, lived by writing theses for the idle and the incompetent, and composed a poem on Medicine, till at length his hopes and his ambition conducted him to London. But the golden age of the imagination soon deserted him in his obscure apartment in the glittering metropolis.

He attended the hospitals, but these were crowded by students who, if they relished the science less, loved the trade more: he published a hasty version of Homer's Hymn to Venus, which was good enough to be praised, but not to sell; at length his fertile imagination withering over the task-work of literature, he resigned fame for bread; wrote the preface to Clarke's Survey of the Lakes, compiled medical articles for the Monthly Review; and, wasting fast his ebbing spirits, he retreated to an obscure lodging at Islington, where death relieved a hopeless author, in the twenty-seventh year of his life.

The following unpolished lines were struck off at a heat in trying his pen on the back of a letter; he wrote the names of the Sister Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—the sudden recollection of his own fate rushed on him—and thus the rhapsodist broke out:

" I wonder much, as yet ye're spinning, Fates!
What threads yet twisted out for me, old jades!
Ah, Atropos! perhaps for me thou spinn'st
Neglect, contempt, and penury and woe;
Be't so; whilst that foul fiend, the spleen,
And moping melancholy spare me, all the rest
I'll bear, as should a man; 'twill do me good,
And teach me what no better fortune could,
Humility, and sympathy with others' ills.
——————— Ye destinies,
I love you much; ye flatter not my pride.
Your mien, 'tis true, is wrinkled, hard, and sour;
Your words are harsh and stern; and sterner still
Your purposes to me. Yet I forgive
Whatever you have done, or mean to do.
Beneath some baleful planet born, I've found,
In all this world, no friend with fostering hand
To lead me on to science, which I love
Beyond all else the world could give; yet still
Your rigour I forgive; ye are not yet my foes;
My own untutor'd will's my only curse.
We grasp asphaltic apples; blooming poison!
We love what we should hate; how kind, ye Fates,
To thwart our wishes! O you're kind to scourge!
And flay us to the bone to make us feel!"—

Thus deeply he enters into his own feelings, and abjures his errors, as he paints the utter desolation of the soul while falling into the grave opening at his feet.

The town was once amused almost every morning by a series of humorous or burlesque poems by a writer under the assumed name of *Matthew Bramble*—he was at that very moment one of the most moving spectacles of human melancholy I have ever witnessed.

It was one evening I saw a tall, famished, melancholy man

enter a bookseller's shop, his hat flapped over his eyes, and his whole frame evidently feeble from exhaustion and utter misery. The bookseller inquired how he proceeded in his new tragedy. "Do not talk to me about my tragedy! Do not talk to me about my tragedy! I have indeed more tragedy than I can bear at home!" was the reply, and the voice faltered as he spoke. This man was Matthew Bramble, or rather—M'DONALD, the author of the tragedy of Vimonda, at that moment the writer of comic poetry—his tragedy was indeed a domestic one, in which he himself was the greatest actor amid his disconsolate family; he shortly afterwards perished. M'Donald had walked from Scotland with no other fortune than the novel of "The Independent" in one pocket, and the tragedy of "Vimonda" in the other. Yet he lived some time in all the bloom and flush of poetical confidence. Vimonda was even performed several nights, but not with the success the romantic poet, among his native rocks, had conceived was to crown his anxious labours—the theatre disappointed him—and afterwards, to his feelings, all the world!

LOGAN had the dispositions of a poetic spirit, not cast in a common mould; with fancy he combined learning, and with eloquence philosophy.

His claims on our sympathy arise from those circumstances in his life which open the secret sources of the calamities of authors; of those minds of finer temper, who, having tamed the heat of their youth by the patient severity of study, from causes not always difficult to discover, find their favourite objects and their fondest hopes barren and neglected. It is then that the thoughtful melancholy, which constitutes so large a portion of their genius, absorbs and consumes the very faculties to which it gave birth.

Logan studied at the University of Edinburgh, was ordained in the church of Scotland—and early distinguished as a poet by the simplicity and the tenderness of his verses, yet the philosophy of history had as deeply interested his studies. He gave two courses of lectures. I have heard from his pupils their admiration, after the lapse of many years; so striking were those lectures for having successfully applied the science of moral philosophy to the history of nations. All wished that Logan should obtain the chair of the Professor of Universal History—but from some point of etiquette he failed in obtaining that distinguished office.

This was his first disappointment in life, yet then perhaps but lightly felt; for the public had approved of his poems, and a successful poet is easily consoled. Poetry to such a gentle being seems a universal specific for all the evils of life; it acts at the

moment, exhausting and destroying too often the constitution it seems to restore.

He had finished the tragedy of "Runnymede;" it was accepted at Covent-garden, but interdicted by the Lord Chamberlain, from some suspicion that its lofty sentiments contained allusions to the politics of the day. The Barons-in-arms who met John, were conceived to be deeper politicians than the poet himself was aware of. This was the second disappointment in the life of this man of genius.

The third calamity was the natural consequence of a tragic poet being also a Scotch clergyman. Logan had inflicted a wound on the Presbytery, heirs of the genius of old Prynne, whose puritanic fanaticism had never forgiven Home for his "Douglas," and now groaned to detect genius still lurking among them. Logan, it is certain, expressed his contempt for them; they their hatred of him : folly and pride in a poet, to beard Presbyters in a land of Presbyterians!

He gladly abandoned them, retiring on a small annuity. They had, however, hurt his temper—they had irritated the nervous system of a man too susceptible of all impressions, gentle or unkind—his character had all those unequal habitudes which genius contracts in its boldness and its tremors; he was now vivacious and indignant, and now fretted and melancholy. He flew to the metropolis, occupied himself in literature, and was a frequent contributor to the "English Review." He published "A Review of the Principal Charges against Mr. Hastings." Logan wrestled with the genius of Burke and Sheridan; the House of Commons ordered the publisher Stockdale to be prosecuted, but the author did not live to rejoice in the victory obtained by his genius.

This elegant philosopher has impressed on all his works the seal of genius; and his posthumous compositions became even popular; he who had with difficulty escaped excommunication by Presbyters, left the world after his death two volumes of sermons, which breathe all that piety, morality, and eloquence admire. His unrevised lectures, published under the name of a person, one Rutherford, who had purchased the MS., were given to the world in "A View of Ancient History." But one highly-finished composition he had himself published; it is a philosophical review of Despotism : had the name of Gibbon been affixed to the title-page, its authenticity had not been suspected [1].

[1] This admirable little work is entitled, "A Dissertation on the Government, Manners, and Spirit of Asia; Murray, 1787." It is anonymous; but the publisher informed me it was written by Logan. His "Elements of the Philosophy of History" are valuable. His "Sermons" have been republished.

From one of his executors, Dr. Donald Grant, who wrote the life prefixed to his poems, I heard of the state of his numerous MSS.; the scattered yet warm embers of the unhappy bard. Several tragedies, and one on Mary Queen of Scots, abounding with all that domestic tenderness and poetic sensibility which formed the soft and natural feature of his muse; these, with minor poems, thirty lectures on the Roman History, and portions of a periodical paper, were the wrecks of genius! He resided here, little known out of a very private circle, and perished in his fortieth year, not of penury, but of a broken heart. Such noble and well-founded expectations of fortune and fame, all the plans of literary ambition overturned, his genius, with all its delicacy, its spirit, and its elegance, became a prey to that melancholy which constituted so large a portion of it.

Logan, in his "Ode to a Man of Letters," had formed this lofty conception of a great author: —

"Won from neglected wastes of time,
Apollo hails his fairest clime,
The provinces of mind;
An Egypt with eternal towers [1];
See Montesquieu redeem the hours
From Louis to mankind.

No tame remission genius knows,
No interval of dark repose,
To quench the ethereal flame;
From Thebes to Troy, the victor flies,
And Homer with his hero vies,
In varied paths to Fame."

Our children will long repeat his "Ode to the Cuckoo," one of the most lovely poems in our language; magical stanzas of picture, melody, and sentiment.

These authors were undoubtedly men of finer feelings, who all perished immaturely, victims in the higher department of literature! But this article would not be complete without furnishing the reader with a picture of the fate of one, who, with a pertinacity of industry not common, having undergone regular studies, not very injudiciously deemed that the life of a man of letters could provide for the simple wants of a philosopher.

This man was the late ROBERT HERON, who, in the following letter, transcribed from the original, stated his history to the Literary Fund. It was written in a moment of extreme bodily suffering and mental agony. In the house to which he had been hurried for debt—at such a moment, he found eloquence in a narrative, pathetic from its simplicity, and valuable for its

[1] The finest provinces of Egypt gained from a neglected waste.

genuineness, as giving the results of a life of literary industry, productive of great infelicity and disgrace; one would imagine that the author had been a criminal rather than a man of letters.

"THE CASE OF A MAN OF LETTERS, OF REGULAR EDUCATION, LIVING BY HONEST LITERARY INDUSTRY.

"Ever since I was eleven years of age I have mingled with my studies the labour of teaching or of writing, to support and educate myself.

"During about twenty years, while I was in constant or occasional attendance at the University of Edinburgh, I taught and assisted young persons, at all periods, in the course of education; from the Alphabet to the highest branches of Science and Literature.

"I read a course of Lectures on the Law of Nature, the Law of Nations, the Jewish, the Grecian, the Roman and the Canon Law, and then on the Feudal Law; and on the several forms of Municipal Jurisprudence established in Modern Europe. I printed a Syllabus of these Lectures, which was approved. They were intended as introductory to the professional study of Law, and to assist gentlemen who did not study it professionally, in the understanding of History.

"I translated Fourcroy's Chemistry twice, from both the second and the third editions of the original; Fourcroy's Philosophy of Chemistry; Savary's Travels in Greece: Dumourier's Letters; Gessner's Idylls in part; an abstract of Zimmerman on Solitude, and a great diversity of smaller pieces.

"I wrote a journey through the Western Parts of Scotland, which has passed through two editions; a History of Scotland in six volumes 8vo; a Topographical Account of Scotland, which has been several times reprinted; a number of communications in the Edinburgh Magazine; many Prefaces and Critiques; a Memoir of the life of Burns the Poet, which suggested and promoted the subscription for his family; has been many times reprinted, and formed the basis of Dr. Currie's Life of him, as I learned by a letter from the Doctor to one of his friends; a variety of *Jeux d'Esprit* in verse and prose; and many abridgments of large works.

"In the beginning of 1799 I was encouraged to come to London. Here I have written a great multiplicity of articles in almost every branch of science and literature; my education at Edinburgh having comprehended them all. The London Review, the Agricultural Magazine, the Anti-jacobin Review, the Monthly Magazine, the Universal Magazine, the Public

Characters, the Annual Necrology, with several other periodical works, contain many of my communications. In such of those publications as have been reviewed, I can show that my anonymous pieces have been distinguished with very high praise. I have written also a short system of Chemistry in one volume 8vo; and I published a few weeks since a small work called "Comforts of Life[1]," of which the first edition was sold in one week, and the second edition is now in rapid sale.

"In the Newspapers—the Oracle, the Porcupine when it existed, the General Evening Post, the Morning Post, the British Press, the Courier, etc., I have published many Reports of Debates in Parliament, and, I believe, a greater variety of light fugitive pieces than I know to have been written by any one other person.

"I have written also a variety of compositions in the Latin and the French languages, in favour of which I have been honoured with the testimonies of liberal approbation.

"I have invariably written to serve the cause of religion, morality, pious christian education, and good order, in the most direct manner. I have considered what I have written as mere trifles; and have incessantly studied to qualify myself for something better. I can prove that I have, for many years, read and written, one day with another, from twelve to sixteen hours a day. As a human being, I have not been free from follies and errors. But the tenor of my life has been temperate, laborious, humble, quiet, and, to the utmost of my power, beneficent. I can prove the general tenor of my writings to have been candid, and ever adapted to exhibit the most favourable views of the abilities, dispositions, and exertions of others.

"For these last ten months I have been brought to the very extremity of bodily and pecuniary distress.

"I shudder at the thought of perishing in a jail.

"92 Chancery-lane, Feb. 2, 1807.

(In confinement.)

The physicians reported that Robert Heron's health was such "as rendered him totally incapable of extricating himself from the difficulties in which he was involved, by the *indiscreet exertion of his mind, in protracted and incessant literary labours.*"

About three months after, Heron sunk under a fever, and

[1] "The Comforts of Life" were written in prison; "The Miseries" necessarily in a drawing-room. The works of authors are often in contrast with themselves; melancholy authors are the most jocular, and the most humorous the most melancholy.

perished amid the walls of Newgate. We are disgusted with this horried state of pauperism; we are indignant at beholding an author, not a contemptible one, in this last stage of human wretchedness! after early and late studies, after having read and written from twelve to sixteen hours a day!—O, ye populace of scribblers! before ye are driven to a garret, and your eyes are filled with constant tears, pause—recollect that few of you possess the learning or the abilities of Heron.

The fate of Heron—is the fate of hundreds of authors by profession in the present day; of men of some literary talent, who can never extricate themselves from a degrading state of poverty.

LABORIOUS AUTHORS.

THIS is one of the groans of old BURTON over his laborious work, when he is anticipating the reception it is like to meet with, and personates his objectors:—He says,

"This is a thinge of meere industrie; a collection without wit or invention; a very toy!—So men are valued! their labours vilified by fellowes of no worth themselves, as things of nought; who could not have done as much."

There is, indeed, a class of authors who are liable to forfeit all claims to genius, whatever their genius may be—these are the laborious writers of voluminous works; but they are farther subject to heavier grievances, to be undervalued or neglected by the apathy or the ingratitude of the public.

Industry is often conceived to betray the absence of intellectual exertion, and the magnitude of a work is imagined necessarily to shut out all genius. Yet a laborious work as often had an original growth and raciness in it, requiring a genius whose peculiar feeling, like invisible vitality, is spread through the mighty body. Feeble imitations of such laborious works have proved the master's mind that is in the original. There is a talent in industry, which every industrious man does not possess; and even taste and imagination may lead to the deepest studies of antiquities, as well as mere undiscerning curiosity and plodding dulness.

But there are other more striking characteristics of intellectual feeling in authors of this class. The fortitude of mind which enables them to complete labours of which, in many instances, they are conscious that the real value will only be appreciated by dispassionate posterity, themselves rarely living to witness the fame of their own work established; while they endure the

captiousness of malicious cavillers. It is said that the Optics of NEWTON had no character or credit here till noticed in France. It would not be the only instance of an author writing above his own age, and anticipating its more advanced genius. How many works of erudition might be adduced to show their authors' disappointments! PRIDEAUX's learned work of the "Connexion of the Old and New Testament," and SHUCKFORD's similar one, were both a long while before they could obtain a publisher, and much longer before they found readers. It is said Sir WALTER RALEIGH burned the second volume of his History from the ill success the first had met with. PRINCE's "Worthies of Devon" was so unfavourably received by the public, that the laborious and patriotic author was so discouraged as not to print the second volume, which is said to have been prepared for the press.—FARNEWORTH's elaborate Translation, with notes and dissertations, of Machiavel's Works, was hawked about the town; and the poor author discovered that he understood Machiavel better than the public. After other labours of this kind, he left his family in distressed circumstances.—Observe, this excellent book now bears a high price!—The fate of the "Biographia Britannica," in its first edition, must be noticed: the spirit and acuteness of CAMPBELL, the curious industry of OLDYS, and the united labours of very able writers, could not secure public favour; this treasure of our literary history was on the point of being suspended, when a poem by Gilbert West drew the public attention to that elaborate work, which, however, still languished, and was hastily concluded.—GRANGER says of his admirable work, in one of his letters, "On a fair state of my account, it would appear that my labours in the improvement of my work do not amount to *half the pay of a scavenger!*" He received only one hundred pounds to the times of Charles I., and the rest to depend on public favour for the continuation. The sale was sluggish; even Walpole seemed doubtful of its success, though he probably secretly envied the skill of our portrait-painter. It was too philosophical for the mere collector, and it took near ten years before it reached the hands of philosophers; the author derived little profit, and never lived to see its popularity established! We have had many highly valuable works suspended for their want of public patronage, to the utter disappointment, and sometimes the ruin of their authors; such are OLDYS's "British Librarian," MORGAN's "Phœnix Britannicus," Dr. BERKENHOUT's "Biographia Literaria," Professor MARTYN's and Dr. LETTICE's "Antiquities of Herculaneum:" all these are *first* volumes, there are no *seconds*! They are now rare, curious, and high priced! Ungrateful public! Unhappy authors!

That noble enthusiasm which so strongly characterises genius, in productions whose originality is of a less ambiguous nature, has been experienced by some of these laborious authors, who have sacrificed their lives and fortunes to their beloved studies. The enthusiasm of literature has often been that of heroism, and many have not shrunk from the forlorn hope.

RUSHWORTH and RYMER, to whose collections our history stands so deeply indebted, must have strongly felt this literary ardour, for they passed their lives in forming them; till Rymer, in the utmost distress, was obliged to sell his books and his fifty volumes of MSS. which he could not get printed; and Rushworth died in the King's Bench, of a broken heart; many of his papers still remain unpublished. His ruling passion was amassing state matters, and he voluntarily neglected great opportunities of acquiring a large fortune for this entire devotion of his life. The same fate has awaited the similar labours of many authors to whom the history of our country lies under deep obligations. ARTHUR COLLINS, the historiographer of our Peerage, and the curious collector of the valuable "Sydney papers," and other collections, passed his life in rescuing these wrecks of antiquity, in giving authenticity to our history, or contributing fresh materials to it; but his midnight vigils were cheered by no patronage, nor his labours valued, till the eye that pored on the mutilated MS. was for ever closed. Of all those curious works of the late Mr. STRUTT, which are now bearing such high prices, all were produced by extensive reading, and illustrated by his own drawings, from the manuscripts of different epochs in our history. What was the result to that ingenious artist and author, who, under the plain simplicity of an antiquary, concealed a fine poetical mind, and an enthusiasm for his beloved pursuits to which only we are indebted for them? Strutt, living in the greatest obscurity, and voluntarily sacrificing all the ordinary views of life, and the trade of his *burin*, solely attached to national antiquities, and charmed by calling them into a fresh existence under his pencil, I have witnessed at the British Museum, forgetting for whole days his miseries, in sedulous research and delightful labour; at times even doubtful whether he could get his works printed; for some of which he was not regaled even with the Roman supper of "a radish and an egg." How he left his domestic affairs, his son can tell; how his works have tripled their value, the booksellers. In writing on the Calamities attending the love of literary labour, Mr. JOHN NICHOLS, the modest annalist of the literary history of the last century, and the friend of half the departed genius of our country, cannot but occur to me. He zealously published more than fifty works, illustrating the literature and the antiquities of the country;

labours not given to the world without great sacrifices. Bishop Hurd, with friendly solicitude, writes to Mr. Nichols on some of his own publications, "While you are enriching the Antiquarian world" (and, by the Life of Bowyer, may be added the Literary), "I hope you do not forget yourself. *The profession of an author, I know from experience, is not a lucrative one.*—I only mention this because I see a large catalogue of your publications." At another time the Bishop writes, "You are very good to excuse my freedom with you; but, as times go, almost any trade is better than that of an author," etc. On these notes Mr. Nichols confesses, "I have had some occasion to regret that I did not attend to the judicious suggestions." We owe to the late THOMAS DAVIES, the author of "Garrick's Life," and other literary works, beautiful editions of some of our elder poets, which are now eagerly sought after, yet, though all his publications were of the best kinds, and are now of increasing value, the taste of Tom Davies twice ended in bankruptcy. It is to be lamented for the cause of literature, that even a bookseller may have too refined a taste for his trade; it must always be his interest to float on the current of public taste, whatever that may be; should he have an ambition to *create* it, he will be anticipating a more cultivated curiosity by half a century; thus the business of a bookseller rarely accords with the design of advancing our literature.

The works of literature, it is then but too evident, receive no equivalent; let this be recollected by him who would draw his existence from them. A young writer often resembles that imaginary author whom Johnson, in a humorous letter in the Idler (No. 55), represents as having composed a work "of universal curiosity, computed that it would call for many editions of his book, and that in five years he should gain fifteen thousand pounds by the sale of thirty thousand copies." There are, indeed, some who have been dazzled by the good fortune of GIBBON, ROBERTSON, and HUME; we are to consider these favourites, not merely as authors, but as possessing, by their situation in life, a certain independence which preserved them from the vexations of the authors I have noticed. Observe, however, that the uncommon sum Gibbon received for copyright, though it excited the astonishment of the philosopher himself, was for the continued labour of a *whole life,* and probably the *library* he had purchased for his work equalled at least in cost the produce of his *pen;* the tools cost the workman as much as he obtained for his work. Six thousand pounds gained on these terms will keep an author indigent!

Many great labours have been designed by their authors, even to be posthumous, prompted only by their love of study,

and a patriotic zeal. Bishop KENNETT's stupendous "Register and Chronicle," volume I., is one of those astonishing labours, which could only have been produced by the pleasure of study urged by the strong love of posterity. It is a diary in which the bishop, one of our most studious and active authors, has recorded every matter of fact, "delivered in the words of the most authentic books, papers, and records." The design was to preserve our literary history from the Restoration. This silent labour he had been pursuing all his life, and published the first volume in his sixty-eighth year, the very year he died. But he was so sensible of the coyness of the public taste for what he calls in a letter to a literary friend, "a tedious heavy book," that he gave it away to the publisher. "The volume, too large, brings me no profit. In good truth, the scheme was laid for conscience' sake, to restore a good old principle that history should be purely matter of fact, that every reader, by examining and comparing, may make out a history by his own judgment. I have collections transcribed for another volume, if the bookseller will run the hazard of printing." This volume has never appeared, and the bookseller probably lost a considerable sum by the one published, which valuable volume is now procured with difficulty[1].

These laborious authors have commenced their literary life with a glowing ardour, though the feelings of genius have been obstructed by those numerous causes which occur too frequently in the life of a literary man.

Let us listen to STRUTT, whom we have just noticed, and let us learn what he proposed doing, in the first age of fancy.

Having obtained the first gold medal ever given at the Royal Academy, he writes to his mother, and thus thanks her and his friends for their deep interest in his success: —

"I will at least strive to the utmost, to give my benefactors no reason to think their pains thrown away. If I should not be able to abound in riches, yet, by God's help, I will strive to pluck that palm which the greatest artists of foregoing ages have done before me; *I will strive to leave my name behind me in the world, if not in the splendour that some have, at least with* some marks *of assiduity and study*; which, I can assure you, shall never be wanting in me. Who can bear to hear the names of Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, etc., the most famous of the Italian masters, in the mouth of every one, and not wish to be like them? And to be like them, we must study as they have done, take such pains, and labour continually like them; the which shall not be wanting on my side, I dare affirm; so that,

[1] See Bishop Kennet's letter in Nichols's "Life of Bowyer," vol. i. p. 383.

should I not succeed, I may rest contented, and say I have done my utmost. God has blessed me with a mind to undertake. You, dear madam, will excuse my vanity; you know me, from my childish days, to have been a vain boy, always desirous to execute something to gain me praises from every one; always scheming and imitating whatever I saw done by anybody."

And when Strutt settled in the metropolis, and studied at the British Museum, amid all the stores of knowledge and art, his imagination delighted to expatiate in its future prospects. In a letter to a friend he has thus chronicled his feelings:

"I would not only be a great antiquary, but a refined thinker; I would not only discover antiquities, but would, by explaining their use, render them useful. Such vast funds of knowledge lie hid in the antiquated remains of the earlier ages; these I would bring forth, and set in their true light."

Poor Strutt, at the close of life, was returning to his own first and natural energies, in producing a work of the imagination. He had made considerable progress in one, and the early parts which he had finished bear the stamp of genius; it is entitled "Queenhoo-hall, a Romance of ancient times," full of the picturesque manners and costume, and characters of the age, in which he was so conversant; with many lyrical pieces, which often are full of poetic feeling—but he was called off from the work to prepare a more laborious one. "Queenhoo-hall" remained a heap of fragments at his death; except the first volume, and was filled up by a stranger hand. The stranger was Sir Walter Scott, and "Queenhoo-hall" was the origin of that glorious series of romances where antiquarianism has taken the shape of imagination.

Writing on the calamities attached to literature, I must notice one of a more recondite nature, yet perhaps few literary agonies are more keenly felt. I would not excite an undue sympathy for a class of writers who are usually considered as drudges; but the present case claims our sympathy.

There are men of letters, who, early in life, have formed some favourite plan of literary labour, which they have unremittingly pursued, till, sometimes near the close of life, they either discover their inability to terminate it, or begin to depreciate their own constant labour. The literary architect has grown grey over his edifice; and, as if the black wand of enchantment had waved over it, the colonnades become interminable, the pillars seem to want a foundation, and all the rich materials he had collected together, lie before him in all the disorder of ruins. It may be urged that the reward of literary labour, like the consolations of virtue, must be drawn with all their sweetness from itself; or, that if the author be incom-

petent, he must pay the price of his incapacity. This may be Stoicism, but it is not humanity. The truth is, there is always a latent love of fame, that prompts to this strong devotion of labour; and he who has given a long life to that which he has so much desired, and can never enjoy, might well be excused receiving our insults, if he cannot extort our pity.

A remarkable instance occurs in the fate of the late Rev. WILLIAM COLE; he was the college friend of Walpole, Mason, and Gray; a striking proof how dissimilar habits and opposite tastes and feelings can associate in literary friendship; for Cole, indeed, the public had informed him that his friends were poets and men of wit; and for them, Cole's patient and curious turn was useful, and, by its extravagant trifling, must have been very amusing. He had a gossip's ear, and a tatler's pen —and, among better things, wrote down every grain of literary scandal his insatiable and minute curiosity could lick up; as patient and voracious as an ant-eater, he stretched out his tongue till it was covered by the tiny creatures, and drew them all in at one digestion. All these tales were registered with the utmost simplicity, as the reporter received them; but, being but tales, the exactness of his truth made them still more dangerous lies, by being perpetuated; in his reflections he spared neither friend nor foe; yet, still anxious after truth, and usually telling lies, it is very amusing to observe, that, as he proceeds, he very laudably contradicts or explains away in subsequent memoranda what he had before registered. Walpole, in a correspondence of forty years, he was perpetually flattering, though he must imperfectly have relished his fine taste, while he abhorred his more liberal principles to which sometimes he addressed a submissive remonstrance. He has at times written a letter coolly, and, at the same moment, chronicled his suppressed feelings in his diary, with all the flame and sputter of his strong prejudices. He was expressively nick-named Cardinal Cole. These scandalous chronicles, which only show the violence of his prejudices, without the force of genius, or the acuteness of penetration, were ordered not to be opened till twenty years after his decease; he wished to do as little mischief as he could, but loved to do some. I well remember the cruel anxiety which prevailed in the nineteenth year of these inclosures; it spoiled the digestions of several of our literati who had had the misfortune of Cole's intimate friendship, or enmity. One of these was the writer of the Life of Thomas Baker, the Cambridge Antiquary, who prognosticated all the evil he among others was to endure; and, writhing in fancy under the whip not yet untwisted, justly enough exclaims in his agony, "The attempt to keep these characters

from the public till the subjects of them shall be no more, seems to be peculiarly cruel and ungenerous, since it is precluding them from vindicating themselves from such injurious aspersions, as their friends, perhaps however willing, may at that distance of time be incapable of removing." With this author, Mr. Masters, Cole had quarrelled so often, that Masters writes, "I am well acquainted with the fickleness of his disposition for more than forty years past."

When the lid was removed from this Pandora's box, it happened that some of his intimate friends were alive to perceive in what strange figures they were exhibited by their quondam admirer!

COLE, however, bequeathed to the nation, among his unpublished works, a vast mass of antiquities and historical collections, and one valuable legacy of literary materials. When I turned over the papers of this literary antiquary, I found the recorded cries of a literary martyr.

COLE had passed a long life in the pertinacious labour of forming an "Athenæ Cantabrigienses," and other literary collections—designed as a companion to the work of Anthony Wood. These mighty labours exist in more than fifty folio volumes in his own writing. He began these collections about the year 1745; in a fly leaf of 1777, I found the following melancholy state of his feelings and a literary confession, as forcibly expressed as it is painful to read, when we consider that they are the wailings of a most zealous votary:

"In good truth, whoever undertakes this drudgery of an 'Athenæ Cantabrigienses,' must be contented with no prospect of credit and reputation to himself, and with the mortifying reflection that after all his pains and study, through life, he must be looked upon in a humble light, and only as a journeyman to Anthony Wood, whose excellent book of the same sort will ever preclude any other, who shall follow him in the same track, from all hopes of fame; and will only represent him as an imitator of so original a pattern. For, at this time of day, all great characters, both Cantabrigians and Oxonians, are already published to the world, either in his book, or various others; so that the collection, unless the same characters are reprinted here, must be made up of second-rate persons, and the refuse of authorship.—However, as I have begun, and made so large a progress in this undertaking, *it is death to think of leaving it off*, though, from the former considerations, so little credit is to be expected from it."

Such were the fruits, and such the agonies, of nearly half a century of assiduous and zealous literary labour! Cole urges a strong claim to be noticed among our literary calamities.

Another of his miseries was his uncertainty in what manner he should dispose of his collections: and he has put down this *naïve* memorandum—"I have long wavered how to dispose of all my MS. volumes; to give them to *King's College*, would be to throw them into a *horsepond*; and I had as lieve do one as the other; they are generally so *conceited of their Latin and Greek, that all other studies are barbarism.*"

The dread of incompleteness has attended the life-labours (if the expression may be allowed) of several other authors who have never published their works. Such was the learned Bishop LLOYD, and the Rev. THOMAS BAKER, who was first engaged in the same pursuit as Cole, and carried it on to the extent of about forty volumes in folio. Lloyd is described by Burnet as having "many volumes of materials upon all subjects, so that he could, with very little labour, write on any of them, with more life in his imagination, and a truer judgment, than may seem consistent with such a laborious course of study; but he did not lay out his learning with the same diligence as he laid it in." It is mortifying to learn, in the words of Johnson, that "he was always hesitating and inquiring, raising objections, and removing them, and waiting for clearer light and fuller discovery." Many of the labours of this learned bishop were at length consumed in the kitchen of his descendant. "Baker (says Johnson), after many years passed in biography, left his manuscripts to be buried in a library, because that was imperfect which could never be perfected." And to complete the absurdity, or to heighten the calamity which the want of these useful labours make every literary man feel, half of the collections of Baker sleep in their dust in a turret of the University; while the other, deposited in our national library at the British Museum, and frequently used, are rendered imperfect by this unnatural divorce.

I will illustrate the character of a laborious author by that of ANTHONY WOOD.

WOOD'S "Athenæ Oxonienses" is a history of near a thousand of our native authors; he paints their characters and enters into the spirit of their writings. But authors of this complexion, and works of this nature, are liable to be slighted; for the fastidious are petulant, the volatile inexperienced, and those who cultivate a single province in literature are disposed, too often, to lay all others under a state of interdiction.

WARBURTON, in a work thrown out in the heat of unchastised youth, and afterwards withdrawn from public inquiry, has said of the "Athenæ Oxonienses"—

"Of all those writings given us by the learned Oxford antiquary, there is not one that is not a disgrace to letters; most of them are so to common sense, and some even to human na-

ture. Yet how set out! how tricked! how adorned! how extolled[1]!"

The whole tenor of Wood's life testifies, as he himself tells us, that "books and MSS. formed his Elysium, and he wished to be dead to the world." This sovereign passion marked him early in life, and the image of death could not disturb it. When young, "he walked mostly alone, was given much to thinking and melancholy." The *deliciæ* of his life were the more liberal studies of painting and music, intermixed with those of antiquity; nor could his family, who checked such unproductive studies, ever check his love of them. With what a firm and noble spirit he says,

"When he came to full years, he perceived it was his natural genie, and he could not avoid them—they crowded on him—he could never give a reason why he should delight in those studies, more than in others, so prevalent was nature, mixed with a generosity of mind, and a hatred to all that was servile, sneaking, or advantageous for lucre-sake."

These are not the roundings of a period, but the pure expressions of a man who had all the simplicity of childhood in his feelings. Could such vehement emotions have been excited in the unanimated breast of a clod of literature? Thus early Anthony Wood betrayed the characteristics of genius; nor did the literary passion desert him in his last moments. With his dying hands he still grasped his beloved papers, and his last mortal thoughts dwelt on his *Athenæ Oxonienses.*

It is no common occurrence to view an author speechless in the hour of death, yet fervently occupied by his posthumous fame. Two friends went into his study, to sort that vast multitude of papers, notes, letters—his more private ones he had ordered not to be opened for seven years; about two bushels full were ordered for the fire, which they had lighted for the occasion. "As he was expiring, he expressed both his knowledge and approbation of what was done by throwing out his hands."

Turn over his Herculean labour; do not admire less his fearlessness of danger, than his indefatigable pursuit of truth. He wrote of his contemporaries as if he felt a right to judge of them, and as if he were living in the succeeding age; courtier, fanatic, or papist, were much alike to honest Anthony; for he professes himself "such an universal lover of all mankind, that he wished there might be no cheat put upon readers and writers in the business of commendations. And (says he) since every one will have a double balance, one for his own party, and another for his adversary, all he could do, is to amass together

[1] In his "Critical and Philosophical Enquiry into the Causes of Prodigies."

what every side thinks will make best weight for themselves. Let posterity hold the scales."

Anthony might have added, "I have held them." This uninterrupted activity of his spirits was the action of a sage, not the bustle of one intent merely on heaping up a book.

"He never wrote in post, with his body and thoughts in a hurry, but in a fixed abode, and with a deliberate pen. And he never concealed an ungrateful truth, nor flourished over a weak place, but in sincerity of meaning and expression."

Anthony Wood cloistered an athletic mind, a hermit critic abstracted from the world, existing more with posterity than amid his contemporaries. His prejudices were the keener from the very energies of the mind that produced them; but, as he practises no deception on his reader, we know the causes of his anger or his love. And, as an original thinker creates a style for himself, from the circumstance of not attending to style at all, but to feeling, so Anthony Wood's has all the peculiarity of the writer. Critics of short views have attempted to screen it from ridicule, attributing his uncouth style to the age he lived in. But not one in his own time, nor since, has composed in the same style. The austerity and the quickness of his feelings, vigorously stamped all their roughness and vivacity on every sentence. He describes his own style as "an honest, plain English dress, without flourishes or affectation of style, as best becomes a history of truth and matters of fact. It is the first (work) of its nature that has ever been printed in our own, or in any other mother-tongue."

It is, indeed, an honest Montaigne-like simplicity. Acrimonious and cynical, he is always sincere, and never dull. Old Anthony to me is an admirable character-painter, for anger and love are often picturesque. And among our literary historians he might be compared, for the effect he produces, to Albert Durer, whose kind of antique rudeness has a sharp outline, neither beautiful nor flowing; and, without a genius for the magic of light and shade, he, is too close a copier of Nature to affect us by ideal forms.

The independence of his mind nerved his ample volumes, his fortitude he displayed in the contest with the University itself, and his firmness in censuring Lord Clarendon, the head of his own party. Could such a work, and such an original manner, have proceeded from an ordinary intellect? Wit may sparkle, and sarcasm may bite; but the cause of literature is injured when the industry of such a mind is ranked with that of "the hewers of wood, and drawers of water;" ponderous compilers, or creeping commentators. Such a work as the "Athenæ Oxonienses" involved in its pursuits some of the higher qualities of

the intellect; a voluntary devotion of life, a sacrifice of personal enjoyments, a noble design combining many views, some present and some prescient, a clear vigorous spirit equally diffused over a vast surface. But it is the hard fate of authors of this class to be levelled with their inferiors!

Let us exhibit one more picture of the calamities of a laborious author, in the character of JOSHUA BARNES, editor of Homer, Euripides, and Anacreon, and the writer of a vast number of miscellaneous compositions in history and poetry. Besides the works he published, he left behind him nearly fifty unfinished ones; many were epic poems, all intended to be in twelve books, and some had reached their eighth! His folio volume of "The History of Edward III." is a labour of valuable research. He wrote with equal facility in Greek, Latin, and his own language, and he wrote all his days; and, in a word, having little or nothing but his Greek professorship, not exceeding forty pounds a year, Barnes, who had a great memory, a little imagination, and no judgment, saw the close of a life, devoted to the studies of humanity, settle around him in gloom and despair. The great idol of his mind was the edition of his Homer, which seems to have completed his ruin; he was haunted all his days with a notion that he was persecuted by envy, and much undervalued by the world; the sad consolation of the secondary and third-rate authors, who often die persuaded of the existence of ideal enemies. To be enabled to publish his Homer at an enormous charge, he wrote a poem, the design of which is to prove that Solomon was the author of the Iliad, and it has been said that this was done to interest his wife, who had some property, to lend her aid towards the publication of so divine a work. This happy pun was applied for his epitaph:—

Joshua Barnes,
Felicis memoriæ, judicium expectans.
Here lieth
Joshua Barnes,
OF HAPPY MEMORY, AWAITING JUDGMENT!

The year before he died he addressed the following letter to the Earl of Oxford, which I transcribe from the original. It is curious to observe how the veteran and unhappy scribbler, after his vows of retirement from the world of letters, thoroughly disgusted with "all human learning," gently hints to his patron, that he has ready for the press, a singular variety of contrasted works, yet even then he did not venture to disclose one-tenth part of his concealed treasures!

TO THE EARL OF OXFORD.

Oct. 16, 1711.

"My Hon. Lord,

"This, not in any doubt of your goodness and high respect to learning, for I have fresh instances of it every day; but because I am prevented in my design of waiting personally on you, being called away by my business for Cambridge, to read Greek lectures this term; and my circumstances are pressing, being, through the combination of booksellers, and the meaner arts of others, too much prejudiced in the sale. I am not neither sufficiently ascertained whether my Homer and Letters came to your honour; surely the vast charges of that edition has almost broke my courage, there being much more trouble in putting off the impression, and contending with a subtle and unkind world, than in all the study and management of the press.

"Others, my Lord, are younger, and their hopes and helps are fresher; I have done as much in the way of learning as any man living, but have received less encouragement than any, having nothing but my Greek professorship, which is but forty pounds per annum, that I can call my own, and more than half of that is taken up by my expenses of lodging and diet in terme time at Cambridge.

"I was obliged to take up three hundred and fifty pounds on interest towards this last work, whereof I still owe two hundred pounds, and two hundred more for the printing; the whole expense arising to about one thousand pounds. I have lived in the university above thirty years, fellow of a college now above forty years standing, and fifty-eight years of age; am bachelor of divinity, and have preached before kings; but am now your honour's suppliant, and would fain retire from the study of humane learning, which has been so little beneficial to me, if I might have a little prebend, or sufficient anchor to lay hold on; only I have two or three matters ready for the press—an ecclesiastical history, Latin; an heroic poem of the Black Prince, Latin; another of Queen Anne, English, finished; a treatise of Columnes, Latin; and an accurate treatise about Homer, Greek, Latin, etc. I would fain be permitted the honour to make use of your name in some one, or most of these, and to be, etc.

JOSHUA BARNES[1]."

He died nine months afterwards. Homer did not improve in

[1] Harleian MSS. 7523.

sale; and the sweets of patronage were not even tasted. This, then, is the history of a man of great learning, of the most pertinacious industry, but somewhat allied to the family of the *Scribleri.*

THE DESPAIR OF YOUNG POETS.

WILLIAM PATTISON was a young poet who perished in his twentieth year; his character and his fate resemble those of Chatterton. He was one more child of that family of genius whose passions, like the torch, kindle but to consume themselves.

The youth of Pattison was that of a poet. Many become irrecoverably poets by local influence; and Beattie could hardly have thrown his "Minstrel" into a more poetical solitude than the singular spot which was haunted by our young bard. His first misfortune was that of having an anti-poetical parent; his next was that of having discovered a spot which confirmed his poetical habits, inspiring all the melancholy and sensibility he loved to indulge. This spot, which in his fancy resembled some favourite description in Cowley, he called "Cowley's Walk." Some friend, who was himself no common painter of fancy, has delineated the whole scenery with minute touches, and a freshness of colouring, warm with reality. Such a poetical habitation becomes a part of the poet himself, reflecting his character, and even descriptive of his manners.

"On one side of 'Cowley's Walk,' is a huge rock, grown over with moss and ivy climbing on its sides, and in some parts small trees spring out of the crevices of the rock; at the bottom are a wild plantation of irregular trees, in every part looking aged and venerable. Among these cavities, one larger than the rest was the cave he loved to sit in: arched like a canopy, its rustic borders were edged with ivy hanging down, overshadowing the place, and hence he called it (for poets must give a name to every object they love) 'Hederinda,' bearing ivy. At the foot of this grotto a stream of water ran along the walk, so that its level path had trees and water on one side, and a wild rough precipice on the other. In winter, this spot looked full of horror—the naked trees, the dark rock, and the desolate waste; but in the spring, the singing of the birds, the fragrancy of the flowers, and the murmuring of the stream, blended all their enchantment."

Here, in the heat of the day, he escaped into the "Hederinda," and shared with friends his rapture and his solitude;

and here, through summer nights, in the light of the moon he meditated and melodised his verses, by the gentle fall of the waters. Thus was Pattison fixed and bound up in the strongest spell the demon of poetry ever drew around a susceptible and careless youth.

He was now a decided poet. At Sidney College, in Cambridge, he was greatly loved; till, on a quarrel with a rigid tutor, he rashly cut his name out of the college book, and quitted it for ever in utter thoughtlessness and gaiety, leaving his gown behind, as his *locum tenens*, to make his apology, by pinning on it a satirical farewell.

> "Whoever gives himself the pains to stoop,
> And take my venerable tatters up,
> To his presuming inquisition I,
> In *loco Pattisoni*, thus reply:
> 'Tired with the senseless jargon of the gown,
> My master left the college for the town,
> And scorns his precious minutes to regale
> With wretched college-wit and college-ale.'"

He flew to the metropolis, to take up the trade of a poet.

A translation of Ovid's Epistles had engaged his attention during two years; his own genius seemed inexhaustible; and pleasure and fame were awaiting the poetical emigrant. He resisted all kind importunities to return to college; he could not endure submission, and declares "his spirit cannot bear control." One friend "fears the innumerable temptations to which one of his complexion is liable in such a populous place." Pattison was much loved; he had all the generous impetuosity of youthful genius; but he had resolved on running the perilous career of literary glory, and he added one more to the countless thousands who perish in obscurity.

His first letters are written with the same spirit that distinguishes Chatterton's; all he hopes he seems to realise. He mixes among the wits, dates from Button's, and drinks with Concanen healths to college friends, till they lose their own; more dangerous Muses condescend to exhibit themselves to the young poet in the Park; and he was to be introduced to Pope! All is exultation! Miserable youth! The first thought of prudence appears in a resolution of soliciting subscriptions from all persons, for a volume of poems.

His young friends at college exerted their warm patronage; those in his native North condemn him, and save their crowns; Pope admits of no interview, but lends his name, and bestows half-a-crown for a volume of poetry, which he did not want; the poet wearies kindness, and would extort charity even from

brother-poets; petitions lords and ladies, and, as his wants grow on him, his shame decreases.

How the scene has changed in a few months! He acknowledges to a friend, that "his heart was broke through the misfortunes he had fallen under;" he declares "he feels himself near the borders of death." In moments like these, he probably composed the following lines, awfully addressed,

AD COELUM!

"Good heaven! this mystery of life explain,
Nor let me think I bear the load in vain;
Lest, with the tedious passage cheerless grown,
Urged by despair, I throw the burden down."

But the torture of genius, when all its passions are strained on the rack, was never more pathetically expressed than in the following letter:—

"SIR,

"If you was ever touched with a sense of humanity, consider my condition, what *I am*, my proposals will inform you; what *I have been,* Sidney College, in Cambridge, can witness; but what *I shall be* some few hours hence, I tremble to think! Spare my blushes!—I have not enjoyed the common necessaries of life for these two days, and can hardly hold to subscribe myself,

"Yours, etc.

The picture is finished—it admits not of another stroke. Such was the complete misery which Savage, Boyse, Chatterton, and more innocent spirits devoted to literature, have endured—but not long—for they must perish in their youth!

HENRY CAREY was one of our most popular poets; he, indeed, has unluckily met with only dictionary critics, or what is as fatal to genius, the cold undistinguishing commendation of grave men on subjects of humour, wit, and the lighter poetry. The works of Carey do not appear in any of our great collections, where Walsh, Duke, and Yalden slumber on the shelf.

Yet Carey was a true son of the Muses, and the most successful writer in our language. He is the author of several little national poems. In early life he successfully burlesqued the affected versification of Ambrose Philips, in his baby poems, to which he gave the fortunate appellation of "*Namby Pamby,* a panegyric on the new versification;" a term descriptive in sound of those chiming follies, and now become a technical term in modern criticism. Carey's "Namby Pamby" was at first consi-

dered by Swift as the satirical effusion of Pope, and by Pope as the humorous ridicule of Swift. His ballad of "Sally in our Alley" was more than once commended for its nature by Addison, and is sung to this day. Of the national song, "God save the King," it is supposed he was the author both of the words and the music. He was very successful on the stage, and wrote admirable burlesques of the Italian opera, in "The Dragon of Wantley," and "The Dragoness;" and the mock tragedy of "Chrononhotonthologos" is not forgotten. Among his Poems lie still concealed several original pieces; those which have a political turn are particularly good, for the politics of Carey were those of a poet and a patriot. I refer the politician who has any taste for poetry and humour, to "The Grumbletonians, or the Dogs without doors, a Fable," very instructive to those grown-up folks, "The Ins and the Outs." "Carey's Wish" is in this class; and, as the purity of election remains still among the desiderata of every true Briton, a poem on that subject by the patriotic author of our national hymn of "God save the King" may be acceptable.

CAREY'S WISH.

"Cursed be the wretch that's bought and sold,
And barters liberty for gold;
For when election is not free,
In vain we boast of liberty:
And he who sells his single right,
Would sell his country, if he might.

When liberty is put to sale
For wine, for money, or for ale,
The sellers must be abject slaves,
The buyers vile designing knaves;
A proverb it has been of old,
The devil's bought but to be sold.

This maxim in the statesman's school
Is always taught, *divide and rule*.
All parties are to him a joke:
While zealots foam, he fits the yoke.
Let men their reason once resume;
'Tis then the statesman's turn to fume.

Learn, learn, ye Britons, to unite;
Leave off the old exploded bite;
Henceforth let whig and tory cease,
And turn all party-rage to peace;
Rouse and revive your ancient glory;
Unite, and drive the world before you."

To the ballad of "Sally in our Alley" Carey has prefixed an argument so full of nature, that the song may hereafter derive

an additional interest from its simple origin. The author assures the reader that the popular notion that the subject of his ballad had been the noted Sally Salisbury, is perfectly erroneous, he being a stranger to her name at the time the song was composed.

"As innocence and virtue were ever the boundaries of his Muse, so in this little poem he had no other view than to set forth the beauty of a chaste and disinterested passion, even in the lowest class of human life. The real occasion was this: A shoemaker's prentice, making holiday with his sweetheart, treated her with a sight of Bedlam, the puppet-shows, the flying chairs, and all the elegancies of Moorfield's; from whence, proceeding to the Farthing Pye-house, he gave her a collation of buns, cheesecakes, gammon of bacon, stuffed beef, and bottled ale; through all which scenes the Author dodged them (charmed with the simplicity of their courtship), from whence he drew this little sketch of Nature; but, being then young and obscure, he was very much ridiculed for this performance; which, nevertheless, made its way into the polite world, and amply recompensed him by the applause of the divine Addison, who was pleased (more than once) to mention it with approbation."

In "The Poet's Resentment" poor Carey had once forsworn "the harlot Muse:"—

> "Far, far away then chase the harlot Muse,
> Nor let her thus thy noon of life abuse;
> Mix with the common crowd, unheard, unseen,
> And if again thou tempt'st the vulgar praise,
> Mayst thou be crown'd with birch instead of bays!"

Poets make such oaths in sincerity, and break them in rapture.

At the time that this poet could neither walk the streets nor be seated at the convivial board, without listening to his own songs and his own music—for, in truth, the whole nation was echoing his verse, and crowded theatres were applauding his wit and humour—while this very man himself, urged by his strong humanity, founded a "Fund for decayed Musicians"—he was so broken-hearted, and his own common comforts so utterly neglected, that, in despair, not waiting for nature to relieve him from the burden of existence, he laid violent hands on himself; and when found dead, had only a halfpenny in his pocket! Such was the fate of the author of some of the most popular pieces in our language! He left a son, who inherited his misery, and a gleam of his genius.

THE MISERIES OF THE FIRST ENGLISH COMMENTATOR.

Dr. Zachary Grey, the editor of Hudibras, is the father of our modern commentators. His case is rather peculiar; I know not whether the father, by an odd anticipation, was doomed to suffer for the sins of his children, or whether his own have been visited on the third generation; it is certain that never was an author more overpowered by the attacks he received from the light and indiscriminating shafts of ignorant wits. He was ridiculed and abused for having assisted us to comprehend the wit of an author, which, without that aid, at this day would have been nearly lost to us; and whose singular subject involved persons and events which required the very thing he gave,—historical and explanatory notes.

A first thought, and all the danger of an original invention, which is always imperfectly understood by the superficial, was poor Dr. Grey's merit. He was modest and laborious, and he had the sagacity to discover what Butler wanted, and what the public required. His project was a happy thought, to commentate on a singular work which has scarcely a parallel in modern literature, if we except the "Satyre Ménippée" of the French, which is, in prose, the exact counterpart of Hudibras in rhyme; for our rivals have had the same state revolution, in which the same dramatic personages passed over their national stage, with the same incidents, in the civil wars of the ambitious Guises, and the citizen-reformers. They, too, found a Butler, though in prose, a Grey in Duchat, and, as well as they could, a Hogarth. An edition, which appeared in 1711, might have served as the model of Grey's Hudibras.

It was, however, a happy thought in our commentator, to turn over the contemporary writers to collect the events and discover the personages alluded to by Butler; to read what the poet read, to observe what the poet observed. This was at once throwing himself and the reader back into an age, of which even the likeness had disappeared, and familiarising us with distant objects, which had been lost to us in the haze and mists of time. For this, not only a new mode of travelling, but a new road, was to be opened; the secret history, the fugitive pamphlet, the obsolete satire, the ancient comedy—such were the many curious volumes whose dust was to be cleared away, to cast a new radiance on the fading colours of a moveable picture of manners; the wittiest ever exhibited to mankind. This new mode of research, even at this moment, is imperfectly comprehended, still

ridiculed even by those who could never have understood a writer who will only be immortal in the degree he is comprehended—and whose wit could not have been felt but for the laborious curiosity of him whose "reading" has been too often aspersed for "such reading"

"As was never read."

Grey was outrageously attacked by all the wits, first by Warburton, in his preface to Shakespeare, who declares, that, "he hardly thinks there ever appeared so execrable a heap of nonsense under the name of commentaries, as hath been lately given us on a certain satyric poet of the last age." It is odd enough, Warburton had himself contributed towards these very notes, but, for some cause which has not been discovered, had quarrelled with Dr. Grey. I will venture a conjecture on this great conjectural critic. Warburton was always meditating to give an edition of his own of our old writers, and the sins he committed against Shakespeare he longed to practise on Butler, whose times were, indeed, a favourite period of his researches. Grey had anticipated him—and though Warburton had half reluctantly yielded the few notes he had prepared, his proud heart sickened when he beheld the amazing subscription Grey obtained for his first edition of Hudibras; he received for that work 1500*l.*[1]—a proof that this publication was felt as a want by the public.

Such, however, is one of those blunt, dogmatic censures in which Warburton abounds, to impress his readers with the weight of his opinions; this great man wrote more for effect than any other of our authors, as appears by his own or some friend's confession, that if his edition of Shakespeare did no honour to that bard, this was not the design of the commentator —which was only to do honour to himself by a display of his own exuberant erudition.

The poignant Fielding, in his preface to his "Journey to Lisbon," has a fling at the gravity of our doctor. "The laborious, much-read Dr. Z. Grey, of whose redundant notes on Hudibras I shall only say, that it is, I am confident, the single book extant in which above 500 authors are quoted, not one of which could be found in the collection of the late Dr. Mead." Mrs. Montague, in her letters, severely characterises the miserable father of English commentators; she wrote in youth and spirits, with no knowledge of books, and *before* even the unlucky commentator had published his work, but wit is the bolder by anticipation.—She observes, that "his dulness may be a proper ballast

[1] Cole's MSS.

for doggrel; and it is better that his stupidity should make jest dull than serious and sacred things ridiculous;" alluding to his numerous theological tracts.

Such then are the hard returns which some authors are doomed to receive as the rewards of useful labours from those who do not even comprehend their nature; a wit should not be admitted as a critic till he had first proved, by his gravity, or his dulness if he chooses, that he has some knowledge; for it is the privilege and nature of wit to write fastest and best on what it least understands. Knowledge only encumbers and confines its flights.

THE LIFE OF AN AUTHORESS.

Of all the sorrows in which the female character may participate, there are few more affecting than those of an Authoress; —often insulated and unprotected in society—with all the sensibility of the sex, encountering miseries which break the spirits of men; with the repugnance arising from that delicacy which trembles when it quits its retirement.

My acquaintance with an unfortunate lady of the name of Eliza Ryves, was casual and interrupted; yet I witnessed the bitterness of "hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick." She sank, by the slow wastings of grief, into a grave which probably does not record the name of its martyr of literature.

She was descended from a family of distinction in Ireland; but as she expressed it, "she had been deprived of her birthright by the chicanery of law." In her former hours of tranquillity she had published some elegant odes, had written a tragedy and comedies; all which remained in MS. In her distress, she looked up to her pen as a source of existence; and an elegant genius, and a woman of polished manners, commenced the life of a female trader in literature.

Conceive the repulses of a modest and delicate woman in her attempts to appreciate the value of a manuscript with its purchaser. She has frequently returned from the booksellers to her dreadful solitude to hasten to her bed—in all the bodily pains of misery, she has sought in uneasy slumbers a temporary forgetfulness of griefs which were to recur on the morrow. Elegant literature is always of doubtful acceptance with the public, and Eliza Ryves came at length to try the most masculine exertions of the pen. She wrote for one newspaper much political matter; but the proprietor was too great a politician for the writer of politics, for he only praised the labour he never paid; much poetry

for another, in which, being one of the correspondents of Della Crusca, in payment of her verses she got nothing but verses; the most astonishing exertion for a female pen was the entire composition of the historical and political portion of some Annual Register. So little profitable were all these laborious and original efforts, that every day did not bring its "daily bread." Yet even in her poverty her native benevolence could make her generous; for she has deprived herself of her meal, to provide with one, an unhappy family dwelling under the same roof.

Advised to adopt the mode of translation, and being ignorant of the French language, she retired to an obscure lodging at Islington, which she never quitted till she had produced a good version of Rousseau's "Social Compact," Raynal's "Letter to the National Assembly," and finally translated De la Croix's "Review of the Constitutions of the principal States in Europe," in two large volumes, with intelligent notes. All these works, so much at variance with her taste, left her with her health much broken, and a mind which might be said to have nearly survived the body.

Yet even at a moment so unfavourable, her ardent spirit engaged in a translation of Froissart. At the British Museum I have seen her conning over the magnificent and voluminous MS. of the old chronicler, and by its side Lord Berners's version, printed in the reign of Henry VIII. It was evident that his lordship was employed as a spy on Froissart, to inform her of what was going forward in the French camp; and she soon perceived, for her taste was delicate, that it required an ancient lord and knight, with all his antiquity of phrase, to break a lance with the still more ancient chivalric Frenchman. The familiar elegance of modern style failed to preserve the picturesque touches and the *naïve* graces of the chronicler, who wrote as the mailed knight combated—roughly or gracefully, as suited the tilt or field. She vailed to Lord Berners; while she felt it was here necessary to understand old French, and then to write in Old English [1]. During these profitless labours hope seemed to be whispering in her lonely study. Her comedies had been in possession of the managers of the theatres during several years. They had too much merit to be rejected, perhaps too little to be acted. Year passed over year, and the last still repeated the treacherous promise of its brother. The mysterious arts of procrastination are by no one so well systematised as by the theatrical manager, nor its secret sorrows so deeply felt as by the dramatist. One of her comedies, "The Debt of Honour," had been warmly approved at both theatres—where probably a

[1] This version of Lord Berners has been lately reprinted.

copy of it may still be found. To the honour of one of the managers, he presented her with a hundred pounds on his acceptance of it. Could she avoid then flattering herself with an annual harvest?

But even this generous gift, which involved in it such golden promises, could not for ten years preserve its delusion. "I feel," said Eliza Ryves, "the necessity of some powerful patronage, to bring my comedies forward to the world with *éclat*, and secure them an admiration which, should it even be deserved, is seldom bestowed, unless some leading judge of literary merit gives the sanction of his applause; and then the world will chime in with his opinion, without taking the trouble to inform themselves whether it be founded in justice or partiality." She never suspected that her comedies were not comic! —but who dare hold an argument with an ingenuous mind, when it reasons from a right principle, with a wrong application to itself? It is true that a writer's connexions have often done a great deal for a small author, and enabled some favourites of literary fashion to enjoy a usurped reputation; but it is not so evident that Eliza Ryves was a comic writer, although, doubtless, she appeared another Menander to herself. And thus an author dies in a delusion of self-flattery!

The character of Eliza Ryves was rather tender and melancholy, than brilliant and gay; and like the bruised perfume—breathing sweetness when broken into pieces. She traced her sorrows in a work of fancy, where her feelings were at least as active as her imagination. It is a small volume, entitled "The Hermit of Snowden." Albert, opulent and fashionable, feels a passion for Lavinia, and meets the kindest return; but, having imbibed an ill opinion of women from his licentious connexions, he conceived they were slaves of passion, or of avarice. He wrongs the generous nature of Lavinia, by suspecting her of mercenary views; hence arise the perplexities of the hearts of both. Albert affects to be ruined, and spreads the report of an advantageous match. Lavinia feels all the delicacy of her situation; she loves, but "she never told her love." She seeks for her existence in her literary labours, and perishes in want.

In the character of Lavinia, our authoress, with all the melancholy sagacity of genius, foresaw and has described her own death!—the dreadful solitude to which she was latterly condemned, when in the last stage of her poverty; her frugal mode of life; her acute sensibility; her defrauded hopes; and her exalted fortitude. She has here formed a register of all that occurred in her solitary existence. I will give one scene,—to me it is pathetic,—for it is like a scene at which I was present:

"Lavinia's lodgings were about two miles from town, in an obscure situation. I was showed up to a mean apartment, where Lavinia was sitting at work, and in a dress which indicated the greatest economy. I inquired what success she had met with in her dramatic pursuits. She waved her head, and, with a melancholy smile, replied, 'that her hopes of ever bringing any piece on the stage were now entirely over; for she found that more interest was necessary for the purpose than she could command, and that she had for that reason laid aside her comedy for ever!' While she was talking, came in a favourite dog of Lavinia's, which I had used to caress. The creature sprang to my arms, and I received him with my usual fondness. Lavinia endeavoured to conceal a tear which trickled down her cheek. Afterwards she said, 'Now that I live entirely alone, I show Juno more attention than I had used to do formerly. *The heart wants something to be kind to.*—And it consoles us for the loss of society, to see even an animal derive happiness from the endearments we bestow upon it.'"

Such was Eliza Ryves! not beautiful nor interesting in her person, but with a mind of fortitude, susceptible of all the delicacy of feminine softness, and virtuous amid her despair.

THE INDISCRETION OF AN HISTORIAN.

THOMAS CARTE.

"CARTE," says Mr. Hallam, "is the most exact historian we have;" and Daines Barrington prefers his authority to that of any other, and many other writers confirm this opinion. Yet had this historian been an ordinary compiler, he could not have incurred a more mortifying fate; for he was compelled to retail in shilling numbers that invaluable history which we have only learned of late times to appreciate, and which was the laborious fruits of self-devotion.

Carte was the first of our historians who had the sagacity and the fortitude to ascertain where the true sources of our history lie. He discovered a new world, beyond the old one of our research, and not satisfied in gleaning the *res historica* from its original writers, a merit which has not always been possessed by some of our popular historians, Carte opened those subterraneous veins of secret history from whence even the original writers of our history, had they possessed them, might have drawn fresh knowledge and more ample views. Our domestic

or civil history was scarcely attempted till Carte planned it; while all his laborious days and his literary travels on the Continent were absorbed in the creation of a *History of England*, and of a *Public Library* in the metropolis, for we possessed neither. A diligent foreigner, Rapin, had compiled our history, and had opportunely found in the vast collection of Rymer's "Fœdera" a rich accession of knowledge; but a foreigner could not sympathise with the feelings, or even understand the language, of the domestic story of our nation; our rolls and records, our state-letters, the journals of parliament, and those of the privy-council; an abundant source of private memoirs; and the hidden treasures in the state-paper office, the Cottonian and Harleian libraries; all these, and much besides, the sagacity of Carte contemplated. He had further been taught—by his own examination of the true documents of history, which he found preserved among the ancient families of France, who with a warm patriotic spirit, worthy of imitation, "often carefully preserved in their families the acts of their ancestors;" and the *trésors des chartes* and the *dépôt pour les affaires étrangères* (the state-paper office of France),—that the history of our country is interwoven with that of its neighbours, as well as with that of our own countrymen [1].

Carte, with these enlarged views, and firm with diligence which never paused, was aware that such labours—both for the expense and assistance they demand—exceeded the powers of a private individual; but, "what a single man cannot do," he said, "may be easily done by a society, and the value of an opera subscription would be sufficient to patronise a History of England." His valuable "History of the Duke of Ormond" had sufficiently announced the sort of man who solicited this necessary aid; nor was the moment unpropitious to his fondest hopes, for a *Society for the Encouragement of Learning* had been formed, and this impulse of public spirit, however weak, had, it would seem, roused into action some unexpected quarters. When Carte's project was made known, a large subscription was raised to defray the expense of transcripts, and afford a sufficient independence to the historian; many of the nobility and the gentry subscribed ten or twenty guineas annually, and several of the corporate bodies in the city honourably appeared as the public patrons of the literature of their nation. He had, perhaps, nearly a thousand a year subscribed, which he employed on the history. Thus everything promised fair both for the history and for the historian of our fatherland,

[1] It is much to the honour of Carte, that the French acknowledge that his publication of the *Rolles Gascognes* gave to them the first idea of their learned work, the *Notice des Diplomes*.

and about this time he zealously published another proposal for the erection of a public library in the Mansion-house. "There is not," observed Carte, "a great city in Europe so ill-provided with public libraries as London." He enters into a very interesting and minute narrative of the public libraries of Paris [1]. He then also suggested the purchase of ten thousand manuscripts of the Earl of Oxford, which the nation now possess in the Harleian collection.

Though Carte failed to persuade our opulent citizens to purchase this costly honour, it is probably to his suggestion that the nation owes the British Museum. The ideas of the literary man are never thrown away, however vain at the moment, or however profitless to himself. Time preserves without injuring the image of his mind, and a following age often performs what the preceding failed to comprehend.

It was in 1743 that this work was projected, in 1747 the first volume appeared. One single act of indiscretion, an unlucky accident rather than a premeditated design, overturned in a moment this monument of history;—for it proved that our Carte, however enlarged were his views of what history ought to consist, and however experienced in collecting its most authentic materials, and accurate in their statement, was infected by a superstitious jacobitism, which seemed likely to spread itself through his extensive history. Carte indeed was no philosopher, but a very faithful historian.

Having unhappily occasion to discuss whether the King of England had, from the time of Edward the Confessor, the power of healing inherent in him before his unction, or whether the gift was conveyed by ecclesiastical hands, to show the efficacy of the royal touch, he added an idle story, which had come under his own observation, of a person who appeared to have been so healed. Carte said of this unlucky personage, so unworthily introduced five hundred years before he was born, that he had been sent to Paris to be touched by "the eldest lineal descendant of a race of kings who had indeed for a long succession of ages cured that distemper by the royal touch." The insinuation was unquestionably in favour of the Pretender, although the name of the prince was not avowed, and was a sort of promulgation of the right divine to the English throne.

The first news our author heard of his elaborate history was the discovery of this unforeseen calamity; the public indignation was roused, and subscribers, public and private, hastened to withdraw their names. The historian was left forlorn and

[1] This paper, which is a great literary curiosity, is preserved by Mr. Nichols in his Literary History, vol. ii.

abandoned amid his extensive collections, and Truth, which was about to be drawn out of her well by this robust labourer, was no longer imagined to lie concealed at the bottom of the waters.

Thunderstruck at this dreadful reverse to all his hopes, and witnessing the unquitted labour of more than thirty years withered in an hour, the unhappy Carte drew up a faint appeal; rendered still more weak by a long and improbable tale, that the objectionable illustration had been merely a private note which by mistake had been printed, and only designed to show that the person who had been healed, improperly attributed his cure to the sanative virtue of the regal unction; since the prince in question had never been anointed. But this was plunging from Scylla into Charybdis, for it inferred that the Stuarts inherited the heavenly-gifted touch by descent. This could not avail; yet heavy was the calamity! for now an historian of the utmost probity and exactness, and whose labours were never equalled for their scope and extent, was ruined for an absurd but not peculiar opinion, and an indiscretion which was more ludicrous than dishonest.

This shock of public opinion was met with a fortitude which only strong minds experience; Carte was the true votary of study,—by habit, by devotion, and by pleasure, he persevered in producing an invaluable folio every two years; but from three thousand copies he was reduced to seven hundred and fifty, and the obscure patronage of the few who knew to appreciate them. Death only arrested the historian's pen—in the fourth volume. We have lost the important period of the reign of the second Charles, of which Carte declared the he had read "a series of memoirs from the beginning to the end of that reign which would have laid open all those secret intrigues which Burnet with all his genius for conjecture does not pretend to account for."

So precious were the MS. collections Carte left behind him, that the proprietor valued them at 1500*l.*; Philip Earl of Hardwicke paid 200*l.* only for the perusal, and Macpherson a larger sum for their use; and Hume, without Carte, would scarcely have any authorities. Such was the calamitous result of Carte's historical labours, who has left others of a more philosophical cast, and of a finer taste in composition, to reap the harvest whose soil had been broken by his hand.

LITERARY RIDICULE.

ILLUSTRATED BY SOME ACCOUNT OF A LITERARY SATIRE.

RIDICULE may be considered as a species of eloquence; it has all its vehemence, all its exaggeration, all its power of diminution; it is irresistible! Its business is not with truth, but with its appearance; and it is this similitude, in perpetual comparison with the original, which, raising contempt, produces the ridiculous.

There is nothing real in ridicule; the more exquisite, the more it borrows from the imagination. When directed towards an individual, by preserving a unity of character in all its parts, it produces a fictitious personage, so modelled on the prototype, that we know not to distinguish the true one from the false. Even with an intimate knowledge of the real object, the ambiguous image slides into our mind, for we are at least as much influenced in our opinions by our imagination, as by our judgment. Hence some great characters have come down to us, spotted with the taints of indelible wit; and a satirist of this class, sporting with distant resemblances and fanciful analogies, has made the fictitious accompany for ever the real character. Piqued with Akenside, for some reflections against Scotland, Smollett has exhibited a man of great genius and virtue as a most ludicrous personage; and who can discriminate, in the ridiculous physician in "Peregrine Pickle," what is real from what is fictitious[1]?

[1] Of AKENSIDE few particulars have been recorded, for the friend who best knew him was of so cold a temper with regard to public opinion, that he has not, in his account, revealed a solitary feature in the character of the Poet. Yet Akenside's mind and manners were of a fine romantic cast, drawn from the moulds of classical antiquity. Such was the charm of his converse, that he even heated the cold and sluggish mind of Sir John Hawkins, who has, with unusual vivacity, described a day spent with him in the country. As I have mentioned the fictitious physician in Peregrine Pickle, let the same page show the real one. I shall transcribe Sir John's forgotten words—omitting his "neat and elegant dinner:"—"Akenside's conversation was of the most delightful kind, learned, instructive, and, without any affectation of wit, cheerful and entertaining. One of the pleasantest days of my life I passed with him, Mr. Dyson, and another friend, at Putney—where the enlivening sunshine of a summer's day, and the view of an unclouded sky, were the least of our gratifications. In perfect good-humour with himself and all about him, he seemed to feel a joy that he lived, and poured out his gratulations to the great Dispenser of all felicity, in expressions that Plato himself might have uttered on such an occasion. In conversations with select friends, and those whose studies had

The banterers and ridiculers possess this provoking advantage over sturdy honesty or nervous sensibility—their amusing fictions affect the world more than the plain tale that would put them down. They excite our risible emotions, while they are reducing their adversary to contempt—otherwise they would not be distinguished from gross slanderers. When the wit has gained over the laughers on his side, he has struck a blow which puts his adversary *hors de combat*. A grave reply can never wound ridicule, which, assuming all forms, has really none. Witty calumny and licentious raillery are airy nothings that float about us, invulnerable from their very nature, like those chimeras of hell which the sword of Æneas could not pierce—yet these shadows of truth, these false images, these fictitious realities, have made heroism tremble, turned the eloquence of wisdom into folly, and bowed down the spirit of honour itself.

Not that the legitimate use of RIDICULE is denied: the wisest men have been some of the most exquisite ridiculers; from Socrates to the Fathers, and from the Fathers to Erasmus, and from Erasmus to Butler and Swift. Ridicule is more efficacious than argument; when that keen instrument cuts what cannot be untied. "The Rehearsal" wrote down the unnatural taste for the rhyming heroic tragedies, and brought the nation back from sound to sense, from rant to passion. More important events may be traced in the history of Ridicule. When a certain set of intemperate Puritans, in the reign of Elizabeth, the ridiculous reformists of abuses in church and state, congregated themselves under the literary *nom de guerre* of *Martin Mar-prelate*, a stream of libels ran throughout the nation. The grave discourses of the archbishop and the prelates could never silence the hardy and concealed libellers. They employed a moveable printing-press, and the publishers perpetually shifting their place, long escaped detection. They declared their works were "printed in Europe, not far from some of the bouncing priests;" or they were "printed over sea, in Europe, within two furlongs of a bouncing priest, at the cost and charges of Martin Mar-prelate, gent." It was then that TOM NASH, whom I am about to introduce to the reader's more familiar acquaintance, the most exquisite banterer of that age of genius, turned on them their own weapons, and annihilated them into silence when they found themselves paid in their own base coin. He rebounded their

been nearly the same with his own, it was a usual thing with him, in libations to the memory of eminent men among the ancients, to bring their characters into view, and expatiate on those particulars of their lives that had rendered them famous." Observe the arts of the ridiculer! he seized on the romantic enthusiasm of Akenside, and turned it to *the cookery of the ancients*!

popular ribaldry on themselves, with such replies as "Pap with a hatchet, or a fig for my god-son; or, crack me this nut. To be sold, at the sign of the Crab-tree Cudgel, in Thwack-coat lane[1]." Not less biting was his "Almond for a Parrot, or an Alms for Martin." Nash first silenced *Martin Mar-prelate,* and the government afterwards hanged him; Nash might be vain of the greater honour. A ridiculer then is the best champion to meet another ridiculer; their scurrilities magically undo each other.

But the abuse of ridicule is not one of the least calamities of literature, when it withers genius, and gibbets whom it ought to enshrine. Never let us forget that Socrates before his judges asserted, that "his persecution originated in the licensed raillery of Aristophanes, which had so unduly influenced the popular mind during *several years!*" And thus a fictitious Socrates, not the great moralist, was condemned. Armed with the most licentious ridicule, the Aretine of our own country and times has proved that its chief magistrate was not protected by the shield of domestic and public virtues; a false and distorted image of an intelligent monarch could cozen the gross many, and aid the purposes of the subtle few.

There is a plague-spot in ridicule, and the man who is touched with it, can be sent forth as the jest of his country.

The literary reign of Elizabeth, so fertile in every kind of genius, exhibits a remarkable instance, in the controversy between the witty Tom Nash and the learned Gabriel Harvey. It will illustrate the nature of *the fictions of ridicule,* expose the materials of which its shafts are composed, and the secret arts by which ridicule can level a character which seems to be placed above it.

GABRIEL HARVEY was an author of considerable rank, but with two learned brothers, as Wood tell us, "had the ill luck to fall into the hands of that noted and restless buffoon, Tom Nash."

Harvey is not unknown to the lover of poetry, from his connexion with Spenser, who loved and revered him. He is the Hobynol whose poem is prefixed to the Faery Queen, who introduced Spenser to Sir Philip Sidney: and, besides his intimacy with the literary characters of his times, he was a Doctor of Laws, an erudite scholar, and distinguished as a poet. Such a man could hardly be contemptible; and yet, when some little peculiarities become aggravated, and his works are touched by

[1] This pamphlet has been ascribed to John Lilly, but it must be confessed that its native vigour strangely contrasts with the famous *Euphuism* of that refined writer.

the caustic of the most adroit banterer of that age of wit, no character has descended to us with such grotesque deformity, exhibited in so ludicrous an attitude.

Harvey was a pedant, but pedantry was part of the erudition of an age when our national literature was passing from its infancy; he introduced hexameter verses into our language, and pompously laid claim to an invention which, designed for the reformation of English verse, was practised till it was found sufficiently ridiculous. His style was infected with his pedantic taste, and the hard outline of his satirical humour betrays the scholastic cynic, not the airy and fluent wit. He had, perhaps, the foibles of a man who was clearing himself from obscurity; he prided himself on his family alliances, while he fastidiously looked askance on the trade of his father, a rope-manufacturer. He was somewhat rich in his apparel, according to the rank in society he held; and, hungering after the notice of his friends, they fed him on soft sonnet and relishing dedication, till Harvey ventured to publish a collection of panegyrics on himself—and thus gravely stepped into a niche erected to Vanity. At length he and his two brothers, one a divine and the other a physician, became students of astronomy; then an astronomer usually ended in an almanac-maker, and above all, in an astrologer; an avocation which tempted a man to become a prophet. Their "sharp and learned judgment on earthquakes" drove the people out of their senses (says Wood); but when nothing happened of their predictions, the brothers received a severe castigation from those great enemies of prophets, the wits. The buffoon Tarleton, celebrated for his extempore humour, jested on them at the theatre; Elderton, a drunken ballad-maker, "consumed his ale-crammed nose to nothing in bear-beating them with bundles of ballads." One on the earthquake commenced with "Quake! quake! quake!" They made the people laugh at their false terrors, or, as Nash humorously describes their fanciful panic, "when they sweated and were not a haire the worse." Thus were the three learned brothers beset by all the town-wits; Gabriel had the hardihood, with all undue gravity, to charge pell-mell among the whole knighthood of drollery; a circumstance probably alluded to by Spenser, in a sonnet addressed to Harvey:

> "Harvey, the happy above happier men,
> I read; that sitting like a looker-on
> Of this worlde's stage, dost note with *critique pen*
> The sharp dislikes of each condition;
> And, as one carelesse of suspition,
> Ne fawnest for the favour of the great;
> *Ne fearest foolish reprehension*

Of faulty men, which daunger to thee threat,
But freely doest of what thee list, entreat,
Like a great lord of peerlesse liberty.—"

The "foolish reprehension of faulty men, threatening Harvey with danger," describes that gregarious herd of town-wits in the age of Elizabeth; Kit Marlow, Robert Greene, Dekker, Nash, etc.; men of no moral principle, of high passions, and the most pregnant Lucianic wits who ever flourished at one period[1]. Unfortunately for the learned Harvey, his "critique pen," which is so strange in so polished a mind and so curious a student, indulged a sharpness of invective which would have been peculiar to himself, had his adversary, Nash, not quite outdone him. Their pamphlets foamed against each other, till Nash, in his vehement invective, involved the whole generation of the Harveys, made one brother more ridiculous than the other, and even attainted the fair name of Gabriel's respectable sister. Gabriel, indeed, after the death of Robert Greene, the crony of Nash, sitting like a vampire on his grave, sucked blood from his corpse, in a memorable narrative of the debaucheries and miseries of this town-wit. I throw into the note the most awful satirical address I ever read[2]. It became necessary to dry up

[1] Harvey, in the title-page of his "Pierce's Supererogation," has placed an emblematic woodcut, expressive of his own confidence, and his contempt of the wits. It is a lofty palm-tree, with its durable and impenetrable trunk; at its feet lie a heap of serpents, darting their tongues, and filthy toads, in vain attempting to pierce or to pollute it. The Italian motto, wreathed among the branches of the palm, declares, *Il vostro malignare non giova nulla;* Your malignity avails nothing.

[2] Among those Sonnets, in Harvey's "Foure letters, and certaine Sonnets, especially touching Robert Greene and other parties by him abused, 1592," there is one, which, with great originality of conception, has an equal vigour of style, and causticity of satire, on Robert Greene's death. John Harvey the physician, who was then dead, is thus made to address the town-wit, and the libeller of himself and his family. If Gabriel was the writer of this singular Sonnet, as he undoubtedly is of the verses to Spenser, subscribed Hobynol, it must by confessed he is a Poet, which he never appears in his English hexameters:—

JOHN HARVEY the Physician's Welcome to ROBERT GREENE!

"Come, fellow Greene, come to thy gaping grave,
Bid vanity and foolery farewell,
That ouerlong hast plaid the mad-brained knaue,
And ouerloud hast rung the bawdy bell.
Vermine to vermine must repair at last;
No fitter house for busie folke to dwell;
Thy conny-catching pageants are past *,
Some other must those arrant stories tell;
These hungry wormes thinke long for their repast;
Come on; I pardon thy offence to me;

* Greene had written "The Art of Coney-catching," a great adept in the arts of a town-life.

the floodgates of these rival ink-horns, by an order of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The order is a remarkable fragment of our literary history, and is thus expressed: "That all Nashe's booke's and Dr. Harvey's bookes be taken wheresoever they may be found, and that none of the said bookes be ever printed hereafter."

This extraordinary circumstance accounts for the excessive rarity of Harvey's "Foure Letters, 1592," and that literary scourge of Nash's, "Have with you to Saffron-Walden (Harvey's residence), or Gabriel Harvey's hunt is vp, 1596;" pamphlets now as costly as if they consisted of leaves of gold.

Nash, who, in his other works, writes in a style as flowing as Addison's, with hardly an obsolete vestige, has rather injured this literary invective, by the evident burlesque he affects of Harvey's pedantic idiom; and for this Mr. Malone has hastily censured him, without recollecting the aim of this modern Lucian [1]. The delicacy of irony; the *sous-entendu*, that subtlety of indicating what is not told; all that poignant satire, which is the keener for its polish, were not practised by our first vehement satirists; but a bantering masculine humour, a style stamped in the heat of fancy, with all the life-touches of strong individuality, characterise these licentious wits. They wrote then as the old *fabliers* told their tales, naming everything by its name; our refinement cannot approve, but it cannot diminish their real nature, and among our elaborate graces, their *naïveté* must be still wanting.

In this literary satire NASH has interwoven a kind of ludicrous biography of Harvey; and seems to have anticipated the character of Martinus Scriblerus. I leave the grosser parts of this invective untouched; for my business is not with *slander*, but with *ridicule*.

Nash opens as a skilful lampooner; he knew well that ridicule, without the appearance of truth, was letting fly an arrow

> It was thy living; be not so aghast!
> A fool and a physitian may agree!
> And for my brothers never vex thyself;
> They are not to disease a buried elfe."

[1] Nash was a great favourite with the wits of his day. One calls him "our true English Aretine," another, "Sweet satyric Nash," a third describes his Muse as "armed with a gag-tooth (a tusk), and his pen possessed with Hercules's furies." He is well characterised in "The Return from Parnassus."

> "His style was witty, tho' he had some gall;
> Something he might have mended, so may all;
> Yet this I say, that for *a mother's wit*,
> Few men have ever seen the like of it."

Nash abounds with "Mother-wit;" but he was also educated at the University, with every advantage of classical studies.

upwards, touching no one. Nash accounts for his protracted silence by adroitly declaring, that he had taken these two or three year to get perfect intelligence of Harvey's "Life and Conversation; one true point whereof well sat downe will more excruciate him than *knocking him about the ears with his own style* in a hundred sheets of paper."

And with great humour says—

"As long as it is since he writ against me, so long have I given him a lease of his life, and he hath only held it by my mercy; and now let him thank his friends for this heavy load of disgrace I lay upon him, since I do it but to show my sufficiency; and they urging what a triumph he had over me, hath made me ransack my standish more than I would."

In the history of such a literary hero as Gabriel, the birth has ever been attended by portents. Gabriel's mother "dreamt a dream," that she was delivered "of an immense elder gun that can shoot nothing but pellets of chewed paper: and thought, instead of a boy, she was brought to bed of one of those kistrell birds called a wind-sucker." At the moment of his birth came into the world "a calf with a double tongue and eares longer than any asse's, with his feet turned backwards." Facetious analogies of Gabriel's literary genius!

He then paints to the life the grotesque portrait of Harvey; so that the man himself stands alive before us.—"He was of an adust swarth choleric dye, like restie bacon, or a dried scate-fish; his skin riddled and crumpled like a piece of burnt parchment, with channels and creases in his face, and wrinkles and frets of old age." Nash dexterously attributes this premature old age to his own talents; exulting humorously—

"I have brought him low, and shrewdly broken him; look on his head, and you shall find a gray haire for euerie line I have writ against him; and you shall haue all his beard white too by the time he hath read ouer this booke."

To give a finishing to the portrait, and to reach the climax of personal contempt, he paints the sordid misery in which he lived at Saffron-Walden:—"Enduring more hardness than a camell who will liue four days without water, and feedes on nothing but thistles and wormwood, as he feeds on his estate on trotters, sheep porknells, and buttered rootes, in an hexameter meditation."

In his Venetian velvet and pantofles of pride, we are told—

"He looks, indeed, like a case of tooth-pickes, or a lute-pin stuck in a suit of apparell. An Vsher of a dancing schoole, he is such a *basia de vmbra de vmbra de los pedes;* a kisser of the shadow of your feetes shadow he is!"

This is, doubtless, a portrait resembling the original, with its

Cervantic touches; Nash would not have risked what the eyes of his readers would instantly have proved to be fictitious; and, in fact, though the *Grangerites* know of no portrait of Gabriel Harvey, they will find a wood cut of him by the side of this description; it is, indeed, in a most pitiable attitude, expressing that gripe of criticism which seized on Gabriel "upon the news of the going in hand of my booke."

The ponderosity and prolixity of Gabriel's "period of a mile," are described with a facetious extravagance, which may be given as a specimen of the eloquence of ridicule. Harvey entitled his various pamphlets "Letters."—

"More letters yet from the doctor? Out upon it, here's a packet of epistling, as bigge as a packe of woollen cloth, or a stack of salt fish. Carrier, didst thou bring it by wayne, or by horsebacke? By wayne, sir, and it hath crackt me three axle-trees.—*Heavie* newes! Take them again! I will never open them.—My cart (quoth he deep-sighing) hath cryde creake under them fortie times euerie furlong; wherefore if you be a good man rather make mud-walls with them, mend high-ways, or damme up quagmires with them.

"When I came to unrip and unbumbast this *Gargantuan* bag pudding, and found nothing in it but dogs tripes, swines livers, oxe galls, and sheepes guts, I was in a bitterer chafe than anie cooke at a long sermon, when his meat burnes.

"O 'tis an vnsconscionable vast gor-bellied volume, bigger bulkt than a Dutch hoy, and more cumbersome than a payre of Switzer's galeaze breeches."

And in the same ludicrous style he writes—

"One epistle thereof to John Wolfe (Harvey's printer) I took and weighed in an ironmonger's scale, and it counter poyseth a cade[1] of herrings with three Holland cheeses. It was rumoured about the Court that the guard meant to trie masteries with it before the Queene, and instead of throwing the sledge, or the hammer, to hurle it foorth at the armes end for a wager.

"Sixe and thirtie sheets it comprehendeth, which with him is but sixe and thirtie full points (periods); for he makes no more difference 'twixt a sheet of paper and a full pointe, than there is twixt two black puddings for a pennie, and a pennie for a pair of black puddings. Yet these are but the shortest prouerbes of his wit, for he never bids a man good morrow, but he makes a speech as long as a proclamation, nor drinkes to anie, but he reads a lecture of three howers long, *de Arte bibendi.* O 'tis a precious apothegmatical pedant."

It was the foible of Harvey to wish to conceal the humble

[1] A cade is 500 herrings; a great quantity of an article of no value!

avocation of his father : this forms a perpetual source of the bitterness or the pleasantry of Nash, who, indeed, calls his pamphlet "a full answer to the eldest son of the halter maker," which, he says, "is death to Gabriel to remember; wherefore from time to time he doth nothing but turmoile his thoughts how to invent new pedigrees, and what great nobleman's bastard he was likely to be, not whose sonne he is reputed to be. Yet he would not have a shoo to put on his foote if his father had not traffiqued with the hangman.—Harvey nor his brothers cannot bear to be called the sonnes of a rope-maker, which, by his private confession to some of my friends, was the only thing that most set him afire against me. Turne over his two bookes he hath published against me, wherein he hath clapt paper God's plentie, if that could press a man to death, and see if, in the waye of answer, or otherwise, he once mentioned *the word rope-maker*, or come within forty foot of it; except in one place of his first booke, where he nameth it not neither, but goes thus cleanly to worke:—'and may not a good sonne have a reprobate for his father?' a periphrase of a rope-maker, which, if I should shryue myself, I never heard before." According to Nash, Gabriel took his oath before a justice, that his father was an honest man, and kept his sons at the Universities a long time. "I confirmed it, and added, Ay! which is more, three proud sonnes, that when they met the hangman, their father's best customer, would not put off their hats to him—"

Such repeated raillery on this foible of Harvey touched him more to the quick, and more raised the public laugh, than any other point of attack; for it was merited. Another foible was, perhaps, the finical richness of Harvey's dress, adopting the Italian fashions on his return from Italy, "when he made no bones of taking the wall of Sir Philip Sidney, in his black Venetian velvet." On this the fertile invention of Nash raises a scandalous anecdote concerning Gabriel's wardrobe; "a tale of his hobby-horse reuelling and domineering at Audley-end, when the Queen was there; to which place Gabriel came ruffling it out, hufty tufty, in his suit of veluet—" which he had "untrussed, and pelted the outside from the lining of an old velvet saddle he had borrowed!"—"The rotten mould of that wormeaten relique, he means, when he dies, to hang over his tomb for a monument[1]." Harvey was proud of his refined skill in

[1] This unlucky Venetian velvet coat of Harvey had also produced a "Quippe for an Vpstart Courtier, or a quaint dispute between Veluet-breeches and Cloth-breeches," which poor Harvey declares was "one of the most licentious and intolerable invectives." This blow had been struck by Greene on the "Italianated" Courtier.

"Tuscan authors," and too fond of their worse conceits. Nash alludes to his travels in Italy, "to fetch him twopenny worth of Tuscanism, quite renouncing his natural English accents and gestures, wrested himself wholly to the Italian punctilios, painting himself like a courtezan, till the Queen declared, 'he looked something like an Italian!' At which he roused his plumes, pricked his ears, and run away with the bridle betwixt his teeth." These were malicious tales, to make his adversary contemptible, whenever the merry wits at court were willing to sharpen themselves on him.

One of the most difficult points of attack was to break through that bastion of sonnets and panegyrics with which Harvey had fortified himself by the aid of his friends, against the assaults of Nash. Harvey had been commended by the learned and the ingenious. Our Lucian, with his usual adroitness, since he could not deny Harvey's intimacy with Spenser and Sidney, gets rid of their suffrages by this malicious sarcasm: "It is a miserable thing for a man to be said to have had friends, and now to have neer a one left!"—As for the others, whom Harvey calls "his gentle and liberall friends," Nash boldly caricatures the grotesque crew, as "tender itchie brained infants, that cared not what they did, so they might come in print; worthless whippets, and jackstraws, who meeter it in his commendation, whom he would compare with the highest." The works of these young writers he describes by an image exquisitely ludicrous and satirical:—

"These mushrumpes, who pester the world with their pamphlets, are like those barbarous people in the hot countries, who, when they have bread to make, doe no more than clap the dowe upon a post on the outside of their houses, and there leave it to the sun to bake; so their indigested conceipts, far rawer than anie dowe, at all adventures upon the post they clap, pluck them off who will, and think they have made as good a batch of poetrie as may be."

Of Harvey's list of friends he observes:—

"To a bead-roll of learned men and lords, he appeals, whether he be an asse or no?"

Harvey had said, "Thomas Nash, from the top of his wit looking down upon simple creatures, calleth Gabriel Harvey a dunce, a foole, an ideot, a dolt, a goose-cap, an asse, and so forth; for some of the residue is not to be spoken but with his owne mannerly mouth; but he should have shewed particularlie which wordes in my letters were the wordes of a dunce; which sentences the sentences of a foole; which arguments the arguments of an ideot; which opinions the opinions of a dolt; which

judgments the judgments of a goose-cap; which conclusions the conclusions of an asse[1]."

Thus Harvey reasons, till he becomes unreasonable; one would have imagined that the literary satires of our English Lucian had been voluminous enough, without the mathematical demonstration. The banterers seem to have put poor Harvey nearly out of his wits; he and his friends felt their blows too profoundly; they were much too thin-skinned, and the solemn air of Harvey in his graver moments at their menaces is extremely ludicrous. They frequently called him *Gabrielissime Gabriel,* which quintessence of himself seems to have mightily affected him. They threatened to confute his letters till eternity —which seems to have put him in despair. The following passage, descriptive of Gabriel's distresses, may excite a smile.

"This grand confuter of my letters says, 'Gabriel, if there be any wit or industrie in thee, now I will dare it to the vttermost; write of what thou wilt, in what language thou wilt, and I will confute it, and answere it. Take Truth's part, and I will proouve truth to be no truth, marching ovt of thy dung-voiding mouth.' He will never leave me as long as he is able to lift a pen, *ad infinitum;* if I reply, he has a rejoinder; and for my brief *triplication,* he is prouided with a *quadruplication,* and so he mangles my sentences, hacks my arguments, wrenches my words, chops and changes my phrases, even to the disjoyning and dislocation of my whole meaning."

Poor Harvey! he knew not that there was *nothing real* in ridicule, *no end* to its merry malice!

Harvey's taste for hexameter verses, which he so unnaturally forced into our language, is admirably ridiculed. Harvey had shown his taste for these metres by a variety of poems, to whose subjects Nash thus sarcastically alludes:—

"It had grown with him into such a dictionary custom, that no may pole in the street, no wethercocke on anie churchsteeple, no arbour, no lawrell, no yewe-tree, he would ouerskip, without hayling in this manner. After supper, if he chancst to play at cards with a queen of harts in his hands, he would run upon men's and women's hearts all the night."

And he happily introduces here one of the miserable hexameter conceits of Harvey—

"Stout hart and sweet hart, yet stoutest hart to be stooped."

Harvey's "Encomium Lauri" thus ridiculously commences,

"What might I call this tree? A lawrell? O bonny lawrell,
Needes to thy bowes will I bow this knee, and vayle my bonetto;"

which Nash most happily burlesques by describing Harvey

[1] "Pierce's Supererogation, or a new praise of the Old Asse," 1593.

under a yew-tree at Trinity-hall, composing verses on the weathercock of Allhallows in Cambridge:—

"O thou wether-cocke that stands on the top of All-hallows.
Come thy waies down, if thou darst, for thy crowne, and take the wall on us."

"The hexameter verse (says Nash) I graunt to be a gentleman of an auncient house (so is many an English beggar), yet this clyme of our's hee cannot thrive in; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; hee goes twitching and hopping in our language, like a man running vpon quagmires, vp the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate which he vaunts himself with amongst the Greeks and Latins."

The most humorous part in this Scribleriad, is a ludicrous narrative of Harvey's expedition to the metropolis, for the sole purpose of writing his "Pierce's Supererogation," pitted against Nash's "Pierce Pennilesse." The facetious Nash describes the torpor and pertinacity of his genius, by telling us he had kept Harvey at work—

"For seaven and thirtie weekes space while he lay at his printer's, Wolfe, never stirring out of doors, or being churched all that while—and that in the deadest season that might bee, hee lying in the ragingest furie of the last plague where there dyde above 1600 a weeke in London, ink-squittring and saracenically printing against mee. Three quarters of a year thus immured hee remained, with his spirits yearning empassionment, and agonised fury, thirst of revenge, neglecting soul and bodies health to compasse it—sweating and dealing upon it most intentively."

The narrative proceeds with the many perils which Harvey's printer encountered, by expense of diet, and printing for this bright genius and his friends, whose works "would rust and iron-spot paper to have their names breathed over it;" and that Wolfe designed "to get a privilege betimes, forbidding of all others to sell waste-paper but himselfe." The climax of the narrative, after many misfortunes, ends with Harvey being arrested by the printer, and confined to Newgate, where "his sword is taken from him, to his perpetual disgrace." So much did Gabriel endure for having written a book against Tom Nash!

But Harvey might deny some of these ludicrous facts.—Will he deny? cries Nash—and here he has woven every tale the most watchful malice could collect, varnished for their full effect. Then he adds,

"You see I have brought the doctor out of request at court; and it shall cost me a fall, but I will get him howted out of the Vniuersitie too, ere I giue him ouer." He tells us Harvey was

brought on the stage at Trinity-college, in "the exquisite comedie of Pedantius," where, under "the finical fine schoolmaster, the just manner of his phrase, they stufft his mouth with, and the whole buffianisme throughout his bookes, they bolstered out his part with—euen to the carrying of his gowne, his nice gate in his pantofles, or the affected accent of his speech —Let him deny that there was a shewe made at Clarehall of him and his brothers, called.

Tarrarantantara turba tumultuosa Trigonum
Tri-Harueyorum Tri-harmonia;

and another shewe of the little minnow his brother, at Peterhouse, called

Duns furens, Dick Haruey in a frensie.

Whereupon Dick came and broke the college glass windows, and Dr. Perne caused him to be set in the stockes till the shewe was ended."

This "Duns furens, Dick Harvey in a frensie," was not only the brother of one who ranked high in society and literature, but himself a learned professor. Nash brings him down to "Pigmey Dick, that lookes like a pound of goldsmiths' candles, who had like to commit folly last year with a milk-maid, as a friend of his very soberly informed me. Little and little-wittied Dick, that hath vowed to live and die in defence of Brutus and his Trojans[1]." An Herculean feat of this "Duns furens," Nash tells us, was his setting Aristotle with his heels upwards on the schoolgates at Cambridge, and putting ass's ears on his head, which Tom here records in *perpetuam rei memoriam.* But Wood, our grave and keen literary antiquary, observes—

"To let pass other matters these vain men (the wits) report of Richard Harvey, his works show him quite another person than what they make him to be."

Nash then forms a ludicrous contrast between "witless Gabriel and ruffling Richard." The astronomer Richard was continually baiting the great bear in the firmament, and in his lectures set up atheistical questions, which Nash maliciously adds, "as I am afraid the earth would swallow me if I should but rehearse." And at his close, Nash bitterly regrets he has no more room; "else I should make Gabriel a fugitive out of England, being the rauenousest slouen that ever lapt porredge in noblemen's houses, where he has had already, out of two, his mittimus of Ye may be gone! for he was a sower of seditious

[1] He had written an antiquarian work on the descent of Brutus on our island. —The party also, who at the University attacked the opinions of Aristotle, were nicknamed the *Trojans*, as determined enemies of the *Greeks*.

paradoxes amongst kitchin-boys." Nash seems to have considered himself as an Archilochus, whose satires were so fatal as to induce the satirised after having read them, to hang themselves.

How ill poor Harvey passed through these wit-duels, and how profoundly the wounds inflicted on him and his brothers were felt, appears by his own confessions. In his "Foure Letters," after some curious observations on invectives and satires, from those of Archilochus, Lucian, and Aretine, to Skeltone and Scoggin, and "the whole venemous and viperous brood of old and new raylers," he proceeds to blame even his beloved friend the gentle Spenser, for the severity of his "Mother Hubbard's tale," a satire on the court. "I must needes say, Mother Hubbard in heat of choller, forgetting the pure sanguine of her Sweete Feary Queene, artfully ouershott her malcontent-selfe; as elsewhere I have specified at large, with the good leaue of vnspotted friendship.—Salust and Clodius learned of Tully to frame artificial declamations and pathetical invectives against Tully himselfe; if Mother Hubbard, in the vaine of Chawcer, happen to tel one canicular tale, father Elderton and his son Greene, in the vaine of Skelton or Scoggin, will counterfeit an hundred dogged fables, libles, slaunders, lies, for the whetstone. But many will sooner lose their liues than the least jott of their reputation. What mortal feudes, what cruel bloodshed, what terrible slaughterdome have been committed for the point of honour and some few courtly ceremonies."

The incidents so plentifully narrated in this Lusianic biography, the very nature of this species of satire throws into doubt; yet they still seem shadowed out from some truths; but the truths who can unravel from the fictions? And thus a narrative is consigned to posterity which involves illustrious characters in an inextricable net-work of calumny and genius.

Writers of this class alienate themselves from human kind, they break the golden bond which holds them to society; and they live among us like a polished banditti. In these copious extracts, I have not noticed the more criminal insinuations against the Harveys; I have left the grosser slanders untouched. My object has been only to trace the effects of ridicule, and to detect its artifices, by which the most dignified characters may be deeply injured at the pleasure of a Ridiculer. The wild mirth of ridicule, aggravating and taunting real imperfections, and fastening imaginary ones on the victim in idle sport or ill-humour, strikes at the most brittle thing in the world, a man's good reputation, for delicate matters which are not under the protection of the law, but in which so much of personal happiness is concerned.

LITERARY HATRED.

EXHIBITING A CONSPIRACY AGAINST AN AUTHOR.

In the peaceful walks of literature we are startled at discovering genius with the mind, and, if we conceive the instrument it guides to be a stiletto, with the hand of an assassin,—irascible, vindictive, armed with indiscriminate satire, never pardoning the merit of rival genius, but fastening on it throughout life, till, in the moral retribution of human nature, these very passions, by their ungratified cravings have tended to annihilate the being who fostered them. These passions among literary men are with none more inextinguishable than among *provincial writers*.—Their bad feelings are concentrated by their local contraction. The proximity of men of genius seems to produce a familiarity which excites hatred or contempt; while he who is afflicted with disordered passions imagines that he is urging his own claims to genius by denying them to their possessor. A whole life passed in harassing the industry or the genius which he has not equalled; and instead of running the open career as a competitor, only skulking as an assassin by their side, is presented in the object now before us.

Dr. Gilbert Stuart seems early in life to have devoted himself to literature; but his habits were irregular, and his passions fierce. The celebrity of Robertson, Blair, and Henry, with other Scottish brothers, diseased his mind with a most envious rancour. He confined all his literary efforts to the pitiable motive of destroying theirs; he was prompted to every one of his historical works by the mere desire of discrediting some work of Robertson; and his numerous critical labours were all directed to annihilate the genius of his country. How he converted his life into its own scourge, how wasted talents he might have cultivated into perfection, lost every trace of humanity, and finally perished, devoured by his own fiend-like passions,—shall be illustrated by the following narrative collected from a correspondence now lying before me, which the author carried on with his publisher in London. I shall copy out at some length the hopes and disappointments of the literary adventurer —the colours are not mine; I am dipping my pencil in the pallet of the artist himself.

In June 1773 was projected in the Scottish capital "The Edinburgh Magazine and Review." Stuart's letters breathe the spirit of rapturous confidence. He had combined the sedulous

attention of the intelligent Smellie, who was to be the printer, with some very honourable critics; Professor Baron, Dr. Blacklock, and Professor Richardson; and the first numbers were executed with more talent than periodical publications had then exhibited. But the hardiness of Stuart's opinions, his personal attacks, and the acrimony of his literary libels, presented a new feature in Scottish literature, of such ugliness and horror, that every honourable man soon averted his face from this *boutefeu*.

He designed to ornament his first number with—

"A print of my Lord Monboddo in his quadruped form. I must, therefore, most earnestly beg that you will purchase for me a copy of it in some of the Macaroni-print shops. It is not to be procured at Edinburgh. They are afraid to vend it here. We are to take it on the footing of a figure of an animal, not yet described; and are to give a grave, yet satirical account of it, in the manner of Buffon. It would not be proper to allude to his lordship but in a very distant manner."

It was not, however, ventured on; and the nondescript animal was still confined to the windows of "the Macaroni-print shops." It was however the bloom of the author's fancy, and promised all the mellow fruits it afterwards produced.

In September, this ardour did not abate:—

"The proposals are issued; the subscriptions in the booksellers' shops astonish; correspondents flock in; and, what will surprise you, the timid proprietors of the Scots' Magazine have come to the resolution of dropping their work. You stare at all this, and so do I too."

Thus he flatters himself he is to annihilate his rival, without even striking the first blow. The appearance of his first number is to be the moment when their last is to come forth. Authors, like the discoverers of mines, are the most sanguine creatures in the world: Gilbert Stuart afterwards flattered himself Dr. Henry was lying at the point of death from the scalping of his tomahawk pen; but of this anon.

On the publication of the first number, in November 1773, all is exultation; and an account is facetiously expected that "a thousand copies had emigrated from the Row and Fleet-street."

There is a serious composure in the letter of December, which seems to be occasioned by the tempered answer of his London correspondent. The work was more suited to the meridian of Edinburgh; and from causes sufficiently obvious, its personality and causticity. Stuart, however, assures his friend, that "the second number you will find better than the first, and the third better than the second."

The next letter is dated March 4, 1774, in which I find our author still in good spirits:—

"The magazine rises, and promises much, in this quarter. Our artillery has silenced all opposition. The rogues of the 'uplifted hands' decline the combat." These rogues are the clergy, and some others, who had "uplifted hands" from the vituperative nature of their adversary; for he tells us, that "now the clergy are silent, the town-council have had the presumption to oppose us; and have threatened Creech (the publisher in Edinburgh) with the terror of making him a constable for his insolence. A pamphlet on the abuses of Heriot's Hospital, including a direct proof of perjury in the provost, was the punishment inflicted in return. And new papers are forging to chastise them, in regard to the poor's rate, which is again started; the improper choice of professors; and violent stretches of the impost. The *liberty of the press*, in its fullest extent, is to be employed against them."

Such is the language of reform, and the spirit of a reformist! A little private malignity thus ferments a good deal of public spirit; but patriotism must be independent to be pure. If the Edinburgh Review continues to succeed in its sale, as Stuart fancies, Edinburgh itself may be in some danger. His perfect contempt of his contemporaries is amusing:—

"Monboddo's second volume is published, and, with Kaimes, will appear in our next; the former is a childish performance; the latter rather better. We are to treat them with a good deal of freedom. I observe an amazing falling off in the English Reviews. We beat them hollow. I fancy they have no assistance but from the Dissenters, a dull body of men. The monthly will not easily recover the death of Hawkesworth; and I suspect that Langhorne has forsaken them; for I see no longer his pen."

We are now hastening to the sudden and the moral catastrophe of our tale. The thousand copies which had emigrated to London remained there, little disturbed by public inquiry; and in Scotland, the personal animosity against almost every literary character there, which had inflamed the sale, became naturally the latent cause of its extinction; for its life was but a feverish existence, and its florid complexion carried with it the seeds of its dissolution. Stuart, at length, quarrelled with his coadjutor, Smellie, for altering his reviews. Smellie's prudential dexterity was such, that, in an article designed to level Lord Kaimes with Lord Monboddo, the whole libel was completely metamorphosed into a panegyric. They were involved in a law-suit, about "a blasphemous paper." And now the enraged Zoilus complains of "his hours of peevishness and dissatisfaction." He acknowledges, that "a circumstance had happened which had broke

his peace and ease altogether for some weeks. And now he resolves that this great work shall quietly sink into a mere compilation from the London periodical works. Such, then, is the progress of malignant genius! The author, like him who invented the brazen bull of Phalaris, is writing in that machine of tortures he had contrived for others.

We now come to a very remarkable passage: it is the frenzied language of disappointed wickedness.

"17 June, 1774.

"It is an infinite disappointment to me that the Magazine does not grow in London; I thought the soil had been richer. But it is my constant fate to be disappointed in everything I attempt; I do not think I ever had a wish that was gratified; and never dreaded an event that did not come. With this felicity of fate, I wonder how the devil I could turn projector. I am now sorry that I left London; and the moment that I have money enough to carry me back to it, I shall set off. *I mortally detest and abhor this place, and everybody in it.* Never was there a city where there was so much pretension to knowledge, and that had so little of it. The solemn foppery, and the gross stupidity of the Scottish literati, are perfectly insupportable. I shall drop my idea of a Scots newspaper. Nothing will do in this country that has common sense in it; only cant, hypocrisy, and superstition, will flourish here. *A curse on the country, and all the men, women, and children of it!*"

Again.—"The publication is too good for the country. There are very few men of taste or erudition on this side the Tweed. Yet every idiot one meets with lays claim to both. Yet the success of the Magazine is in reality greater than we could expect, considering that we have every clergyman in the kingdom to oppose it, and that the magistracy of the place are every moment threatening its destruction."

And, therefore, this recreant Scot anathematizes the Scottish people! for not applauding blasphemy, calumny, and every species of literary criminality. Such are the monstrous passions that swell out the poisonous breast of genius, deprived of every moral restraint; and such was the demoniac irritability which prompted a wish in Collot d'Herbois to set fire to the four quarters of the city of Lyons; while, in his "tender-mercies," the kennels of the streets were running with the blood of its inhabitants—remembering still that the Lyonese had, when he was a miserable actor, hissed him off the stage!

Stuart curses his country, and retreats to London. Fallen, but not abject; repulsed, but not altered; degraded, but still

haughty. No change of place could operate any in his heart. He was born in literary crime, and he perished in it. It was now "The English Review" was instituted, with his idol Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, and others. He says. "To Whitaker he assigns the palm of history in preference to Hume and Robertson." I have heard that he considered himself higher than Whitaker, and ranked himself with Montesquieu. He negotiated for Whitaker and himself a doctor of laws' degree; and they were now in the titular possession of all the fame which a dozen pieces could bestow! In "The English Review" broke forth all the genius of Stuart in an unnatural warfare of Scotchmen in London against Scotchmen at Edinburgh. "The bitter herbs," which seasoned it against Blair, Robertson, Gibbon, and the ablest authors of the age, at first provoked the public appetite, which afterwards indignantly rejected the palatable garbage.

But to proceed with our *Literary Conspiracy,* which was conducted by Stuart, with a pertinacity of invention, perhaps not to be paralleled in literary history. That the peace of mind of such an industrious author as Dr. HENRY was for a considerable time destroyed—that the sale of a work on which Henry had expended much of his fortune and his life was stopped; and that, when covered with obloquy and ridicule, in despair he left Edinburgh for London, still encountering the same hostility; that all this was the work of the same hand—perhaps was never even known to its victim. The multiplied forms of this Proteus of the Malevoli were still but one devil; fire or water, or a bull or a lion; still it was the same Proteus, the same Stuart.

From the correspondence before me, I am enabled to collect the commencement and the end of this literary conspiracy, with all its intermediate links. It thus commences:

"25 Nov. 1773.

"We have been attacked from different quarters, and Dr. Henry in particular has given a long and a dull defence of his sermon. I have replied to it, with a degree of spirit altogether unknown in this country. The reverend historian was perfectly astonished; and has actually invited the society for Propagating Christian Knowledge to arm in his cause! I am about to be persecuted by the whole clergy, and I am about to persecute them in my turn. They are hot and zealous; I am cool and dispassionate, like a determined sceptic; since I have entered the lists, I must fight; I must gain the victory, or perish like a man."

" 13 Dec. 1773.

"David Hume wants to review Henry; but that task is so precious that I will undertake it myself. Moses, were he to ask it as a favour, should not have it; yea, not even the man after God's own heart."

" 4 March, 1774.

"This month Henry is utterly demolished; his sale is stopped, many of his copies are returned; and his old friends have forsaken him; pray in what state is he in London? Henry has delayed his London journey; you cannot easily conceive how exceedingly he is humbled [1].

"I wish I could transport myself to London to review him for the Monthly. A fire there, and in the Critical, would perfectly annihilate him. Could you do nothing in the latter? To the former I suppose David Hume has transcribed the criticisms he intended for us. It is precious, and would divert you. I keep a proof of it in my cabinet for the amusement of friends. This great philosopher begins to dote [2]."

Stuart prepares to assail Henry, on his arrival in London, from various quarters—to lower the value of his history in the estimation of the purchasers.

" 21 March, 1774.

"To-morrow morning Henry sets off for London, with immense hopes of selling his history. I wish he had delayed till our last review of him had reached your city. But I really suppose that he has little probability of getting any gratuity. The trade are too sharp to give precious gold for perfect nonsense. I wish sincerely that I could enter Holborn the same hour with

[1] It may be curious to present Stuart's idea of the literary talents of Henry. Henry's unhappy turn for humour, and a style little accordant with historical dignity, lie fairly open to the critic's animadversion. But the research and application of the writer, for that day, were considerable, and are still appreciated. But we are told that "he neither furnishes entertainment nor instruction. Diffuse, vulgar, and ungrammatical, he strips history of all her ornaments. As an antiquary, he wants accuracy and knowledge; and, as an historian, he is destitute of fire, taste, and sentiment. His work is a gazette, in which we find actions and events, without their causes; and in which we meet with the names, without the characters of personages.—He has amassed all the refuse and lumber of the times he would record." Stuart never imagined that the time would arrive, when the name of Henry would be familiar to English readers, and by many that of Stuart would not be recollected.

[2] The critique on Henry, in the Monthly Review, was written by Hume—and, because the philosopher was candid, he is here said to have doted.

him. He should have a repeated fire to combat with. I entreat that you may be so kind as to let him feel some of your thunder. I shall never forget the favour. If Whitaker is in London, he could give a blow. Paterson will give a knock. Strike by all means. The wretch will tremble, grow pale, and return with a consciousness of his debility. I entreat I may hear from you a day or two after you have seen him. He will complain grievously of me to Strahan and Rose. I shall send you a paper about him; an advertisement from Parnassus, in the manner of Boccalini."

"March, 1774.

"Dr. Henry has by this time reached you. I think you ought to pay your respects to him in the Morning Chronicle. If you would only transcribe his jests, it would make him perfectly ridiculous. See for example, what he says of St. Dunstan. A word to the wise."

"March 27, 1774.

"I have a thousand thanks to give you for your insertion of the paper in the London Chronicle; and for the part you propose to act in regard to Henry. I could wish that you knew for certain his being in London before you strike the first blow. An inquiry at Cadell's will give this. When you have an enemy to attack, I shall in return give my best assistance, and aim at him a mortal blow, and rush forward to his overthrow, though the flames of hell should start up to oppose me.

"It pleases me, beyond what I can express, that Whitaker has an equal contempt for Henry. The idiot threatened, when he left Edinburgh, that he would find a method to manage the Reviews, and that he would oppose their panegyric to our censure. Hume has behaved ill in the affair, and I am preparing to chastise him. You may expect a series of papers in the magazine, pointing out a multitude of his errors, and ascertaining his ignorance of English history. It was too much for my temper to be assailed both by infidels and believers. My pride could not submit to it. I shall act in my defence with a spirit which it seems they have not expected."

"11 April, 1774.

"I received, with infinite pleasure, the annunciation of the great man into the capital. It is forcible and excellent; and you have my best thanks for it. You improve amazingly. The poor creature will be stupified with amazement. Inclosed is a paper for him. Boccalini will follow. I shall fall upon a [illegible] to let

David know Henry's transaction about his review. It is mean to the last degree. But what could one expect from the most ignorant and the most contemptible man alive? Do you ever see Macfarlane? He owes me a favour for his history of George III., and would give a fire for the packet. The idiot is to be moderator for the ensuing assembly. It shall not, however, be without opposition.

"Would the paragraph about him from the inclosed leaf of the Edinburgh Review be any disgrace to the Morning Chronicle?"

"20th May, 1774.

"Boccalini I thought of transmitting, when the reverend historian, for whose use it was intended, made his appearance at Edinburgh. But it will not be lost. He shall most certainly see it. David's critique was most acceptable. It is a curious specimen in one view of insolent vanity, and in another of contemptible meanness. The old historian begins to dote, and the new one was never out of dotage."

"3 April, 1775.

"I see every day that what is written to a man's disparagement is never forgot nor forgiven. Poor Henry is on the point of death and his friends declare that I have killed him. I received the information as a compliment, and begged they would not do me so much honour."

But Henry and his history long survived Stuart and his *critiques*; and Robertson, Blair, and Kaimes, with others he assailed, have all taken their due ranks in public esteem. What niche does Stuart occupy? His historical works possess the show, without the solidity, of research; hardy paradoxes, and an artificial style of momentary brilliancy, are none of the lasting materials of history. This shadow of "Montesquieu," for he conceived him only to be his fit rival, derived the last consolation of life from an obscure corner of a Burton ale-house —there, in rival potations, with two or three other disappointed authors, they regaled themselves on ale they could not always pay for, and recorded their own literary celebrity, which had never taken place. Some time before his death, his asperity was almost softened by melancholy; with a broken spirit, he reviewed himself; a victim to that unrighteous ambition which sought to build up its greatness with the ruins of his fellow-countrymen; prematurely wasting talents which might have been directed to literary eminence. And Gilbert Stuart died as he had lived, a victim to intemperance, physical and moral!

UNDUE SEVERITY OF CRITICISM.

DR. KENRICK.—SCOTT OF AMWELL.

We have witnessed the malignant influence of liberal criticism, not only on literary men, but over literature itself, since it is the actual cause of suppressing works which lie neglected, though completed by their authors. The arts of literary condemnation, as they may be practised by men of wit and arrogance, are well known; and it is much less difficult than it is criminal, to scare the modest man of learning, and to rack the man of genius, in that bright vision of authorship sometimes indulged in the calm of their studies;—a generous emotion to inspire a generous purpose! With suppressed indignation, shrinking from the press, such have condemned themselves to a Carthusian silence; but the public will gain as little by silent authors as by a community of lazy monks; or a choir of singers who insist they have lost their voice. That undue severity of criticism which diminishes the number of good authors, is a greater calamity than even that mawkish panegyric, which may invite indifferent ones; for the truth is, a bad book produces no great evil in literature; it dies soon, and naturally; and the feeble birth only disappoints its unlucky parent, with a score of idlers, who are the dupes of their rage after novelty. A bad book never sells unless it be addressed to the passions, and, in that case, the severest criticism will never impede its circulation; malignity and curiosity being passions so much stronger and less delicate than taste or truth.

And who are the authors marked out for attack? Scarcely one of the populace of scribblers; for wit will not lose one silver shaft on game which, struck, no one would take up. It must level at the Historian, whose novel researches throw a light in the depths of antiquity; at the Poet, who, addressing himself to the imagination, perishes if that sole avenue to the heart be closed on him. Such are those who receive the criticism which has sent some nervous authors to their graves, and embittered the life of many whose talents we all regard [1].

[1] So sensible was even the calm Newton to critical attacks, that Whiston tells us he lost his favour, which he had enjoyed for twenty years, for contradicting Newton in his old age; for no man was of "a more fearful temper." Whiston declares that he would not have thought proper to have published his work against Newton's Chronology in his lifetime, "because I knew his temper so well, that I should have expected it would have killed him; as Dr. Bentley, Bishop Stillingfleet's chaplain, told me, that he believed Mr. Locke's thorough

But this species of criticism, though ungenial and nipping at first, does not always kill the tree which it has frozen over.

In the calamity before us, Time, that great autocrat, who in its tremendous march destroys authors, also annihilates critics; and acting in this instance with a new kind of benevolence, takes up some who have been violently thrown down, and fixes them in their proper place; and daily enfeebling unjust criticism, has restored an injured author to his full honours.

It is, however, lamentable enough that authors must participate in that courage which faces the cannon's mouth, or cease to be authors; for military enterprise is not the taste of modest, retired, and timorous characters. The late Mr. Cumberland used to say, that authors must not be thin-skinned, but shelled like the rhinoceros; there are, however, more delicately tempered animals among them, new-born lambs, who shudder at a touch, and die under a pressure.

As for those great authors (though the greatest shrink from ridicule) who still retain public favour, they must be patient, proud, and fearless—patient of that obloquy which still will stain their honour from literary echoers; proud, while they are sensible that their literary offspring is not

> "Deformed, unfinished, sent before its time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up."

And fearless of all critics, when they recollect the reply of Bentley to one who threatened to write him down, "that no author was ever written down but by himself."

An author must consider himself as an arrow shot into the world; his impulse must be stronger than the current of air that carries him on—else he fall!

The character I had proposed to illustrate this calamity was the caustic Dr. KENRICK, who, once during several years, was, in his "London Review," one of the great disturbers of literary repose. The turn of his criticism; the airiness, or the asperity of his sarcasm; the arrogance with which he treated some of our great authors, would prove very amusing; and serve to display a certain talent of criticism. The life of Kenrick too would have afforded some wholesome instruction concerning the morality of a critic. But the rich materials are not at hand! He was a man of talents, who ran a race with the press; could criticise all the genius of the age faster than it was produced;

confutation of the Bishop's metaphysics about the Trinity hastened his end." Pope writhed in his chair from the light shafts which Cibber darted on him; yet they were not tipped with the poison of the Java-tree. Dr. Hawkesworth *died of criticism.*—Singing-birds cannot live in a storm.

could make his own malignity look like wit, and turn the wit of others into absurdity, by placing it topsy-turvy. As thus, when he attacked "The Traveller" of Goldsmith, which he called "a flimsy poem," he discussed the subject as a grave, political pamphlet, condemning the whole system, as raised on false principles. "The Deserted Village" was sneeringly pronounced to be "pretty;" but then it had "neither fancy, dignity, genius, or fire." When he reviewed Johnson's "Tour to the Hebrides," he decrees that the whole book was written "by one who had seen but little," and, therefore, could not be very interesting. His virulent attack on Johnson's Shakespeare may be preserved for its total want of literary decency; and his "Love in the Suds, a town eclogue," where he has placed Garrick with an infamous character, may be useful to show how far witty malignity will advance in the violation of moral decency. He libelled all the genius of the age, and was proud of doing it[1]. Johnson and Akenside preserved a stern silence: but poor Goldsmith, the child of Nature, could not resist attempting to execute martial law, by caning the critic; for which being blamed, he published a defence of himself in the papers. I shall transcribe his feelings on Kenrick's excessive and illiberal criticism.

"The law gives us no protection against this injury. The insults we receive before the public, by being more open, are the more distressing; by treating them with silent contempt, we do not pay a sufficient deference to the opinion of the world. By recurring to legal redress, we too often expose the weakness of the law, which only serves to increase our mortification by failing to relieve us. In short, every man should singly consider himself as a guardian of the liberty of the press, and as far as his influence can extend, should endeavour to prevent its licentiousness becoming at last the grave of its freedom."

Here then is another calamity arising from the calamity of undue severity of criticism, which authors bring on themselves by their excessive anxiety, which throws them into some extremely ridiculous attitudes; and surprisingly influence even authors of good sense and temper. SCOTT of Amwell, the Quaker and Poet, was, doubtless, a modest and amiable man, for Johnson declared "he loved him." When his poems were collected, they were reviewed in the Critical Review; very

[1] In one of his own publications he quotes, with great self-complacency, the following lines on himself:

"The wits who drink water and suck sugar-candy,
Impute the strong spirit of Kenrick to brandy:
They are not so much out; the matter in short is,
He sips *aqua-vitæ* and spits *aqua-fortis*."

offensively to the Poet; for the critic, alluding to the numerous embellishments of the volume, observed, that

"There is a profusion of ornaments and finery about this book, not quite suitable to the plainness and simplicity of the Barclean system; but Mr. Scott is fond of the Muses, and wishes, we suppose, like Captain Macheath, to see his ladies well dressed."

Such was the cold affected witticism of the critic, whom I intimately knew—and I believe he meant little harm! His friends imagined even that this was the solitary attempt at wit he had ever made in his life; for after a lapse of years, he would still recur to it as an evidence of the felicity of his fancy, and the keenness of his satire. The truth is, he was a physician, whose name is prefixed as the editor to a great medical compilation, and who never pretended that he had any taste for poetry. His great art of poetical criticism was always, as Pope expresses a character, "to dwell in decencies;" his acumen, to detect that terrible poetic crime false rhymes, and to employ indefinite terms, which, as they had no precise meaning, were applicable to all things; to commend, occasionally, a passage not always the most exquisite; sometimes to hesitate, while, with delightful candour, he seemed to give up his opinion; to hazard sometimes a positive condemnation on parts which often unluckily proved the most favourite with the poet and the reader. Such was this poetical reviewer, whom no one disturbed in his periodical course, till the circumstance of a plain quaker becoming a poet, and fluttering in the finical ornaments of his book, provoked him from that calm state of innocent mediocrity, into miserable humour, and illiberal criticism.

The effect, however, this pert criticism had on poor Scott was indeed a calamity. It produced an inconsiderate "Letter to the Critical Reviewers." Scott was justly offended at the stigma of quakerism, applied to the author of a literary composition; but too gravely accuses the critic of his scurrilous allusion to Macheath, as comparing him to a highwayman; he seems, however, more provoked at the odd account of his poems; he says, "You rank all my poems together as *bad*, then discriminate some as *good*, and, to complete all, recommend the volume as *an agreeable and amusing collection*." Had the poet been personally acquainted with this tantalizing critic, he would have comprehended the nature of the criticism—and certainly would never have replied to it.

The critic, employing one of his indefinite terms, had said of "Amwell," and some of the early "Elegies," that "they had their share of poetical merit;" he does not venture to assign the proportion of that share, but "the Amœbean and oriental

eclogues, odes, epistles, etc. now added, are *of a much weaker feature, and many of them incorrect.*

Here Scott loses all his dignity as a quaker and a poet—he asks what the critic means by the affected phrase *much weaker feature;* the style, he says, was designed to be somewhat less elevated; and thus addresses the critic :—

"You may, however, be safely defied to pronounce them, with truth, deficient either in strength, or melody of versification! They were designed to be, like Virgil's, descriptive of Nature, simple and correct. Had you been disposed to do me justice, you might have observed that in these eclogues I had drawn from the great prototype Nature, much imagery that had escaped the notice of all my predecessors. You might also have remarked, that when I introduced images that had been already introduced by others, still the arrangement or combination of those images was my own. The praise of originality you might at least have allowed me."

As for their *incorrectness!*—Scott points that accusation with a note of admiration, adding, "with whatever defects my works may be chargeable, the last is that of *incorrectness.*"

We are here involuntarily reminded of Sir Fretful, in "The Critic :"—

"I think the interest rather declines in the fourth act."

"Rises! you mean, my dear friend!"

Perhaps the most extraordinary examples of the irritation of a poet's mind, and a man of amiable temper, are those parts of this letter in which the author quotes large portions of his poetry, to refute the degrading strictures of the reviewer.

This was a fertile principle, admitting of very copious extracts; but the ludicrous attitude is that of an Adonis inspecting himself at his mirror.

That provoking see-saw of criticism, which our learned physician usually adopted in his critiques, was particularly tantalizing to the poet of Amwell. The critic condemns, in the gross, a whole set of eclogues; but immediately asserts of one of them, that "the whole of it has great poetical merit, and paints its subject in the warmest colours." When he came to review the odes, he discovers that "he does not meet with those polished numbers, nor that freedom and spirit, which that species of poetry requires;" and quotes half a stanza, which he declares is "abrupt and insipid." "From twenty-seven odes!" exclaims the writhing poet—"are the whole of my lyric productions to be stigmatised for four lines which are flatter than those that preceded them?" But what the critic could not be aware of, the poet tells us—he designed them to be just what they are. "I knew they were so, when they were first written;

but they were thought sufficiently elevated for the place." And then he enters into an inquiry what the critic can mean by "polished numbers, freedom, and spirit." The passage is curious :—

"By your first criticism, *polished numbers*, if you mean melodious versification, this perhaps the general ear will not deny me. If you mean classical, chaste diction, free from tautologous repetitions of the same thoughts in different expressions; free from bad rhymes, unnecessary epithets, and incongruous metaphors; I believe you may be safely challenged to produce many instances wherein I have failed."

"By *freedom*, your second criterion, if you mean daring transition, or arbitrary and desultory disposition of ideas, however this may be required in the greater ode, it is now, I believe, for the first time, expected in the lesser ode. If you mean that careless, diffuse composition, that conversation-verse, or verse loitering into prose, now so fashionable, this is an excellence which I am not very ambitious of attaining. But if you mean strong, concise, yet natural easy expression, I apprehend the general judgment will decide in my favour. To the general ear, and the general judgment, then do I appeal, as to an impartial tribunal." Here several odes are transcribed. "By *spirit*, your third criticism, I know nothing you can mean but enthusiasm; that which transports us to every scene, and interests us in every sentiment. Poetry without this cannot subsist; every species demands its proportion, from the greater ode, of which it is the principal characteristic, to the lesser, in which a small portion of it only has hitherto been thought requisite. My productions, I apprehend, have never before been deemed destitute of this essential constituent. Whatever I have wrote, I have felt, and I believe others have felt it also."

On "the epistles," which had been condemned in the gross, suddenly the critic turns round courteously to the bard, declaring "they are written in an easy and familiar style, and seem to flow from a good and a benevolent heart." But then sneeringly adds, that one of them being entitled, "An Essay on Painting, addressed to a young Artist, had better have been omitted, because it had been so fully treated in so masterly a manner by Mr. Hayley." This was letting fall a spark in a barrel of gunpowder. Scott immediately analyses his brother poet's poem, to show they have nothing in common; and then compares those similar passages the subject naturally produced, to show that "his poem does not suffer greatly in the comparison." "You may," he adds, after giving copious extracts from both poems, "persist in saying that Mr. Hayley's are the best. Your business then is to prove it." This, indeed, had been a very hazardous

affair for our medical critic, whose poetical feelings were so equable, that he acknowledges "Mr. Scott's poem is just and elegant;" but "Mr. Hayley's is likewise just and elegant;" therefore, if one man has written a piece "just and elegant," there is no need of another on the same subject "just and elegant."

To such an extreme point of egotism was a modest and respectable author most cruelly driven, by the callous playfulness of a poetical critic, who himself had no sympathy for poetry of any quality or any species, and whose sole art consisted in turning about the canting dictionary of criticism. Had Homer been a modern candidate for poetical honours, from him Homer had not been distinguished, even from the mediocrity of Scott of Amwell, whose poetical merits are not, however, slight. In his Amœbean eclogues, he may be distinguished as the poet of botanists.

A VOLUMINOUS AUTHOR WITHOUT JUDGMENT.

VAST erudition, without the tact of good sense, in a voluminous author, what a calamity! for to such a mind no subject can present itself on which he is unprepared to write, and none at the same time on which he can ever write reasonably. The name and the works of WILLIAM PRYNNE have often come under the eye of the reader; but it is even now difficult to discover his real character: for Prynne stood so completely insulated amid all parties, that he was ridiculed by his friends, and execrated by his enemies. The exuberance of his fertile pen, the strangeness and the manner of his subjects, and his pertinacity in voluminous publication, are known, and are nearly unparalleled in literary history.

Could the man himself be separated from the author, Prynne would not appear ridiculous; but the unlucky author of nearly two hundred works[1], and who, as Wood quaintly computes,

[1] That all these works should not be wanting to posterity, Prynne deposited the complete collection in the library of Lincoln's Inn, about forty volumes in folio and quarto. Noy, the Attorney-General, Prynne's great adversary, was provoked at the society's acceptance of these ponderous volumes, and promised to send them the voluminous labours of Taylor the water-poet, to place by their side; he judged, as Wood says, that "Prynne's books were worth little or nothing; that his proofs were no arguments, and his affirmations no testimonies." But honest Anthony, in spite of his prejudices against Prynne, confesses, that though "by the generality of scholars they are looked upon to be rather rhapsodical and confused, than polite or concise; yet, for Antiquaries, Critics, and sometimes for Divines, they are useful." Such erudition as Prynne's always retains its value—the author who could quote a hundred authors on "the unloveliness of love-locks," will always make a good literary chest of drawers, well filled, for those who can make better use of their contents than himself.

"must have written a sheet every day of his life, reckoning from the time that he came to the use of reason and the state of man," has involved his life in his authorship; the greatness of his character loses itself in his voluminous works; and whatever Prynne may have been in his own age, and remains to posterity, he was fated to endure all the calamities of an author who has strained learning into absurdity, and abused zealous industry by chimerical speculation.

Yet his activity, and the firmness and intrepidity of his character in public life, were as ardent as they were in his study—his soul was Roman; and Eachard says, that Charles II., who could not but admire his earnest honesty, his copious learning, and the public persecutions he suffered, and the ten imprisonments he endured; inflicted by all parties, dignified him with the title of "the Cato of the Age;" and one of his own party facetiously described him as William the Conqueror," a title he had most hardly earned by his inflexible and invincible nature. Twice he had been cropped of his ears; for at the first time the executioner having spared the two fragments, the inhuman judge on his second trial discovering them with astonishment, ordered them to be most unmercifully cropped—then he was burnt on his cheek, and ruinously fined, and imprisoned in a remote solitude [1], but had they torn him limb by limb, Prynne had been

[1] Prynne seems to have considered being debarred from pen, ink, and books, as an act more barbarous than the loss of his ears. See his curious book of "A New Discovery of the Prelate's Tyranny; it is a complete collection of everything relating to Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton; three political fanatics, who seem impatiently to have courted the fate of Marsyas. Prynne in his voluminous argument, proving the illegality of the sentences he had suffered, in his ninth point thus gives way to all the feelings of Martinus Scriblerus:—"Point 9th, that the prohibiting of me pen, ink, paper, and books, is against law." He employs an argument to prove that the abuse of any lawful thing never takes away the use of it; therefore the law does not deprive gluttons or drunkards of necessary meat and drink, this analogy he applies to his pen, ink, and books, of which they could not deprive him, though they might punish him for their abuse. He asserts that the popish prelates, in the reign of Mary, were the first who invented this new torture of depriving a scribbler of pen and ink. He quotes a long passage from Ovid's Tristia, to prove, that though exiled to the Isle of Pontus for his wanton books of love, pen and ink were not denied him to compose new poems; that St. John, banished to the Isle of Patmos by the persecuting Domitian, still was allowed pen and ink, for there he wrote the Revelation—and he proceeds with similar facts. Prynne's books abound with uncommon facts on common topics, for he had no discernment; and he seems to have written to convince himself, and not the public.

But to show the extraordinary perseverance of Prynne in his love of scribbling, I transcribe the following title of one of his extraordinary works. He published "Comfortable cordials against discomfortable fears of Imprisonment, containing some Latin verses, sentences and texts of Scripture, *written by Mr. Wm. Prynne on his chamber-walls in* the Tower of London during his imprisonment

in his mind a very polypus, which cut into pieces, still loses none of its individuality.

His conduct on the last of these occasions, when sentenced to be stigmatised, and to have his ears cut close, must be noticed. Turning to the executioner, he calmly invited him to do his duty —"Come, friend, come, burn me! cut me! I fear not! I have learned to fear the fire of hell, and not what man can do unto me; come, scar me! scar me!" In Prynne this was not ferocity, but heroism; Bastwick was intrepid out of spite, and Burton from fanaticism. The executioner had been urged not to spare his victims; and he performed his office with extraordinary severity, cruelly heating his iron twice, and cutting one of Prynne's ears so close, as to take away a piece of the cheek. Pyrnne stirred not in the torture; and when it was done, smiled, observing, "The more I am beaten down, the more I am lift up." After this punishment, in going to the Tower by water, he composed the following verses on the two letters branded on his cheek, S. L. for schismatical libeller, but which Prynne chose to translate "Stigmata Laudis," the stigmas of his enemy, the Archbishop Laud.

> "Stigmata maxillis referens insignia LAUDIS,
> Exultans remeo, victima grata Deo."

The heroic man, who could endure agony and insult, and even thus commemorate his sufferings, with no unpoetical conception, almost degrades his own sublimity when the poetaster sets our teeth on edge by his verse.

> "Bearing Laud's stamps on my cheeks I retire
> Triumphing, God's sweet sacrifice by fire."

The triumph of this unconquered being was, indeed, signal. History scarcely exhibits so wonderful a reverse of fortune, and so strict a retribution, as occurred at this eventful period. He, who had borne from the archbishop, and the Lords in the Star Chamber, the most virulent invectives, wishing them at that instant seriously to consider that some who sat there on the bench might yet stand prisoners at the bar, and need the favour

there; translated by him into English verse, 1641. Prynne literally verifies Pope's description—

> "Is there who lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
> With desperate charcoal round his darken'd walls?"

We have also a catalogue of printed books written by Wm. Prynne, of Lincoln's-Inn, Esq., in these classes—

Before, During, Since } his imprisonment, with the motto *Jucundi acti labores*, 1643.

they now denied—at length saw the prediction completely verified. What were the feelings of Laud, when Prynne, returning from his prison of Mount Orgueil, in triumph, the road strewed with boughs, amid the acclamations of the people—entered the apartment in the Tower which the venerable Laud now in his turn occupied. The unsparing Puritan sternly performed the office of rifling his papers[1], and persecuted the helpless prelate till he led him to the block. Prynne, to use his own words, for he could be

[1] The interesting particulars of this interview have been preserved by the Archbishop himself—and it is curious to observe how Laud could now utter the same tones of murmur and grief to which Prynne himself had recently given way. Studied insult in these cases accompanies power in the hands of a faction. I collect these particulars from "The History of the Troubles and Tryal of Archbishop Laud," and refer to Vicars's "God in the Mount, or a Parliamentarie Chronicle." p. 344, for the Puritanic triumphs.

"My implacable enemy, Mr. Pryn, was picked out as a man whose malice might be trusted to make the search upon me, and he did it exactly. The manner of the search upon me was thus: Mr. Pryn came into the Tower so soon as the gates were open—commanded the Warder to open my door—he came into my chamber, and found me in bed—Mr. Pryn, seeing me safe in bed, falls first to my pockets to rifle them—it was expressed in the warrant that he should search my pockets. Did they remember, when they gave this warrant, how odious it was to Parliaments, and some of themselves, to have the pockets of men searched? I rose, got my gown upon my shoulders, and he held me in the search till past nine in the morning (he had come in betimes in the morning in the month of May). He took from me twenty-one bundles of papers, which I had prepared for my defence, etc., a little book or diary, containing all the occurrences of my life, and my book of private devotions; both written with my own hand. Nor could I get him to leave this last; he must needs see what passed between God and me. The last place he rifled was a trunk which stood by my bed side; in that he found nothing but about forty pounds in money, for my necessary expenses, which he meddled not with, and a bundle of some gloves. This bundle he was so careful to open, as that he caused each glove to be looked into; upon this I tendered him one pair of the gloves, which he refusing, I told him he might take them, and fear no bribe, for he had already done me all the mischief he could, and I asked no favour of him; so he thanked me, took the gloves, and bound up my papers and went his way."—Prynne had a good deal of *cunning* in his character, as well as fortitude. He had all the subterfuges and quirks which, perhaps, form too strong a feature in the character of "an utter Barrister of Lincoln's Inn." His great artifice was secretly printing extracts from the diary of Laud, and placing a copy in the hands of every member of the House, which was a sudden stroke on the Archbishop, when at the bar, that at the moment overcame him. Once when Prynne was printing one of his libels, he attempted to deny being the author, and ran to the printing-house to distribute the forms, but it was proved he had corrected the proof and the revise. Another time, when he had written a libellous letter to the Archbishop, Noy, the attorney-general sent for Prynne from his prison, and demanded of him whether the letter was of his own hand-writing. Prynne said he must see and read the letter before he could determine; and when Noy gave it to him, Prynne tore it to pieces, and threw the fragments out of the window, that it might not be brought in evidence against him. Noy had preserved a copy, but that did not avail him, as Prynne well knew that the misdemeanor was in the letter itself; and Noy gave up the prosecution, as there was now no remedy.

eloquent when moved by passion, "had struck proud Canterbury to the heart; and had undermined all his prelatical designs to advance the bishop's pomp and power [1];" Prynne triumphed —but, even this austere Puritan soon grieved over the calamities he had contributed to inflict on the nation, and, with a humane feeling, he once wished, that "when they had cut off his ears, they had cut off his head." He closed his political existence by becoming an advocate for the Restoration; but, with his accustomed want of judgment, and intemperate zeal, had nearly injured the cause by his premature activity. At the Restoration some difficulty occurred to dispose of "busie Mr. Pryn," as Whitelocke calls him. It is said he wished to be one of the Barons of the Exchequer, but he was made the Keeper of the Records in the Tower, "purposely to employ his head from scribbling against the state and bishops;" where they put him to clear the Augean stable of our national antiquities, and see whether they could weary out his restless vigour. Prynne had, indeed, written till he found no antagonist would reply; and now he rioted in leafy folios, and proved himself to be one of the greatest paper-worms which ever crept into old books and moulded records.

The literary character of Prynne is described by the happy epithet which Anthony Wood applies to him, "Voluminous Prynne." His great characteristic is opposed to that axiom of Hesiod so often quoted, that "half is better than the whole;" a secret which the matter-of-fact-men rarely discover. Wanting judgment, and the tact of good sense, these detailers have no power of selection from their stores, to make one prominent fact represent the hundred minuter ones that may follow it. Voluminously feeble, they imagine expansion is stronger than compression; and know not to generalise, while they only can deal in particulars. Prynne's speeches were just as voluminous as his writings; always deficient in judgment, and abounding in knowledge.—he was always wearying others, but never could himself. He once made a speech to the House, to persuade them the king's concessions were sufficient ground for a treaty; it contains a complete narrative of all the transactions between the king, the Houses, and the army, from the beginning of the parliament; it takes up 140 octavo pages, and kept the house so long together, that the debates lasted from Monday morning till Tuesday morning!

Prynne's literary character may be illustrated by his singular book, "Histriomastix,"—where we observe how an author's exuberant learning, like corn heaped in a granary, grows rank

[1] Breviate of the Bishop's intolerable usurpations, p. 35.

and musty, by a want of power to ventilate and stir about the heavy mass.

This paper-worm may first be viewed in his study, as painted by the picturesque Anthony Wood; an artist in the Flemish school:—

"His custom, when he studied, was to put on a long quilted cap, which came an inch over his eyes, serving as an umbrella to defend them from too much light, and *seldom eating any dinner*, would be every three hours maunching a roll of bread, and now and then refresh his exhausted spirits with ale brought to him by his servant;" a custom to which Butler alludes,

> "Thou that with ale, or viler liquors,
> Didst inspire Withers, Prynne, and Vicars,
> And teach, though it were in despite
> Of nature and their stars to write."

The "HISTRIOMASTIX, the Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedie," is a ponderous quarto, ascending to about 1100 pages; a Puritan's invective against plays and players, accusing them of every kind of crime, including libels against church and state[1]; but it is more remarkable for the incalculable quotations and references foaming over the margins. Prynne scarcely ventures on the most trivial opinion, without calling to his aid whatever had been said in all nations and in all ages; and Cicero and Master Stubbs, Petrarch and Minutius Felix, Isaiah and Froissart's Chronicle, oddly associate in the ravings of erudition. Who, indeed, but the author "who seldom dined," could have quoted perhaps a thousand writers in one volume[2]? A wit of the times remarked of this *Helluo librorum*, that "Nature makes ever the dullest beasts most laborious, and the greatest feeders;" and Prynne has been reproached with a weak digestion, for "returning things unaltered, which is a symptom of a feeble stomach."

When we examine this volume, often alluded to, the birth of the monster seems prodigious and mysterious; it combines two opposite qualities; it is so elaborate in its researches among the thousand authors quoted, that these required years to accumulate, and yet the matter is often temporary, and levelled at fugitive events and particular persons; thus the very formation

[1] Hume, in his History, has given some account of this enormous quarto; to which I refer the reader, vol. vi. chap. lii.

[2] Milton admirably characterises Prynne's absurd learning, as well as his character, in his treatise on "The likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the church," as "a late hot querist for tythes, whom ye may know by *his wits lying ever beside him in the margin, to be ever beside his wits in the text*. A fierce Reformer once; now rankled with a contrary heat."

of this mighty volume seems paradoxical. The secret history of this book is as extraordinary as the book itself, and is a remarkable evidence how, in a work of immense erudition, the arts of a wily sage involved himself, and whoever was concerned in his book, in total ruin. The author was pilloried, fined, and imprisoned; his publisher condemned in the penalty of five hundred pounds, and barred for ever from printing and selling books, and the licenser removed and punished. Such was the fatality attending the book of a man whose literary voracity produced one of the most tremendous indigestions, in a malady of writing.

It was on examining Prynne's trial I discovered the secret history of the "Histriomastix." Prynne was seven years in writing this work, and, what is almost incredible, it was near four years passing through the press. During that interval the eternal scribbler was daily gorging himself with voluminous food, and daily fattening his cooped-up capon. The temporary sedition and libels were the gradual Mosaic inlayings through this shapeless mass.

It appears that the volume of 1100 quarto pages originally consisted of little more than a quire of paper; but Prynne found insuperable difficulties in procuring a licenser, even for this infant Hercules. Dr. Goode deposed that—

"About eight years ago Mr. Prynne brought to him a quire of paper to license, which he refused; and he recollected the circumstance by having held an argument with Prynne on his severe reprehension on the unlawfulness of a man to put on women's apparel, which, the good-humoured doctor asserted was not always unlawful; for suppose Mr. Prynne yourself, as a Christian, was persecuted by pagans, think you not if you disguised yourself in your maid's apparel, you did well? Prynne sternly answered that he thought himself bound rather to yield to death than to do so."

Another licenser, Dr. Harris, deposed, that about seven years ago—

"Mr. Prynne came to him to license a treatise concerning stage-plays; but he would not allow of the same;"—and adds, "So this man did deliver this book when it was young and tender, and would have had it then printed; but it is since grown seven times bigger, and seven times worse."

Prynne not being able to procure these licensers, had recourse to another, Buckner, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was usual for the licenser to examine the MS. before it went to the press; but Prynne either tampered with Buckner, or so confused his intellects by keeping his multifarious volume in the press for four years; and sometimes, I suspect, by numbering

folios for pages, as appears in the work, that the examination of the licenser gradually relaxed; and he declares in his defence that he had only licensed part of it. The bookseller, Sparks, was, indeed, a noted publisher of what was then called "Unlawful and unlicensed books;" and he had declared that it was "an excellent book, which would be called in, and then sell well." He confesses the book had been more than three years in the press, and had cost him three hundred pounds.

The speech of Noy, the attorney-general, conveys some notion of the work itself; sufficiently curious as giving the feelings of those times against the Puritans.

"Who he means by his *modern innovators* in the church, and by *cringing and ducking* to altars, a fit term to bestow on the church; he learned it of the *canters,* being used among them. The musick in the church, the charitable term he giveth it, is not to be a noise of men, but rather a *bleating of brute beasts;* choristers *bellow* the tenor, as it were oxen; *bark* a counterpoint as a kennel of dogs; *roar* out a treble like a sort of bulls; *grunt* out a bass, as it were a number of hogs. Bishops he calls the *silk and satin divines;* says Christ was a Puritan, in his Index. He falleth on those things that have not relation to stage-plays, musick in the church, dancing, new-years' gifts, etc. —then upon altars, images, hair of men and women, bishops and bonfires. Cards and tables do offend him, and perukes do fall within the compass of his theme. His end is to persuade the people that we are returning back again to paganism, and to persuade them to go and serve God in another country, as many are gone already, and set up new laws and fancies among themselves. Consider what may come of it!"

The decision of the Lords of the Star-chamber was dictated by passion as much as justice. Its severity exceeded the crime of having produced an unreadable volume of indigested erudition; and the learned scribbler was too hardly used, scarcely escaping with life. Lord Cottington, amazed at the mighty volume, too bluntly affirmed that Prynne did not write this book alone; "he either assisted the devil, or was assisted by the devil." But secretary Cooke delivered a sensible and temperate speech; remarking on all its false erudition, that,

"By this vast book of Mr. Prynne's, it appeareth that he hath read more than he hath studied, and studied more than he hath considered. He calleth his book 'Histriomastix;' but therein he showeth himself like unto Ajax Anthropomastix, as the Grecians called him, the scourge of all mankind, that is, the whipper and the whip."

Such is the history of a man whose greatness of character was clouded over and lost in a fatal passion for scribbling; such

is the history of a voluminous author whose genius was such that he could write a folio much easier than a page; and "seldom dined" that he might quote "squadrons of authorities [1]."

GENIUS AND ERUDITION, THE VICTIMS OF IMMODERATE VANITY.

THE name of TOLAND is more familiar than his character, yet his literary portrait has great singularity; he must be classed among the "Authors by Profession," an honour secured by near fifty publications; and we shall discover that he aimed to combine with the literary character, one peculiarly his own. With higher talents and more learning than have been conceded to him, there ran in his mind an original vein of thinking. Yet his whole life exhibits in how small a degree great intellectual powers, when scattered through all the forms which Vanity suggests, will contribute to an author's social comforts, or raise him in public esteem. Toland was fruitful in his productions, and still more in his projects; yet it is mortifying to estimate the result of all the intense activity of the life of an author of genius, which terminates in being placed among these Calamities.

Toland's birth was probably illegitimate; a circumstance which influenced the formation of his character. Baptised in ridicule, he had nearly fallen a victim to Mr. Shandy's system of Christian names, for he bore the strange ones of *Janus Junius*, which when the school-roll was called over every morning, afforded perpetual merriment, till the Master blessed him with plain *John*, which the boy adopted and lived in quiet. I must say something on the names themselves, perhaps as ridiculous! May they not have influenced the character of Toland, since they certainly describe it? He had all the shiftings of the double-faced *Janus*, and the revolutionary politics of the ancient *Junius*. His godfathers sent him into the world in cruel mockery, thus to remind their Irish boy of the fortunes that await the desperately bold: nor did Toland forget the strong-marked designations; for to his most objectionable work, the Latin tract entitled *Pantheisticon*, descriptive of what some have con-

[1] The very expression Prynne himself uses, see p. 668 of the Histriomastix; where having gone through "three squadrons," he commences a fresh chapter thus: "The fourth squadron of authorities is the venerable troope of 70 several renowned ancient fathers;" and he throws in more than he promised, all which are quoted volume and page, as so many "play-confounding arguments." He has, perhaps, quoted from three to four hundred authors on a single point.

sidered as an atheistical society, he subscribes these appropriate names, which at the time were imagined to be fictitious.

Toland ran away from school and popery. When in after-life he was reproached with native obscurity, he ostentatiously produced a testimonial of his birth and family, hatched up at a convent of Irish Franciscans in Germany, where the good Fathers subscribed, with their ink tinged with their rhenish, to his most ancient descent, referring to the Irish history! which they considered as a parish register, fit for the suspected son of an Irish Priest!

Toland, from early life, was therefore dependent on patrons; but illegitimate birth creates strong and determined characters, and Toland had all the force and the originality of self-independence. He was a seed thrown by chance to grow of itself wherever it falls.

This child of fortune studied at four Universities; at Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Leyden; from the latter he passed to Oxford, and, in the Bodleian Library, collected the materials for his after-studies.

He loved study, and even at a later period declares, that "no employment or condition of life shall make me disrelish the lasting entertainment of books." In his "Description of Epsom," he observes that the taste for retirement, reading, and contemplation, promotes the true relish for select company, and says,

"Thus I remove at pleasure, as I grow weary of the country or the town, as I avoid a crowd or seek company.—Here then let me have *books and bread* enough without dependence; a bottle of hermitage and a plate of olives for a select friend; with an early rose to present a young lady as an emblem of discretion no less than of beauty."

At Oxford appeared that predilection for paradoxes and over-curious speculations, which formed afterwards the marking feature of his literary character. He has been unjustly contemned as a sciolist; he was the correspondent of Leibnitz, Le Clerc, and Bayle, and was a learned author when scarcely a man. He first published a Dissertation on the strange tragical death of Regulus and proved it a Roman legend. A greater paradox might have been his projected speculation on Job, to demonstrate that only the dialogue was genuine; the rest being the work of some idle Rabbin, who had invented a monstrous story to account for the extraordinary afflictions of that model of a divine mind. Speculations of so much learning and ingenuity are uncommon in a young man; but Toland was so unfortunate as to value his own merits, before those who did not care to hear of them.

Hardy vanity was to recompense him, perhaps he thought, for that want of fortune and connections, which raised duller

spirits above him. Vain, loquacious, inconsiderate, and daring, he assumed the dictatorship of a coffee-house, and obtained easy conquests, which he mistook for glorious ones, over the graver fellows, who had for many a year awfully petrified their own colleges. He gave more violent offence by his new opinions on religion. An anonymous person addressed two letters to this new Heresiarch, solemn and monitory[1]. Toland's answer is as honourable as that of his monitor's. This passage is forcibly conceived:

"To what purpose should I study here or elsewhere, were I an *atheist* or *deist*, for one of the two you take me to be? What a condition to mention virtue, if I believed there was no God, or one so impotent that could not, or so malicious that would not, reveal himself! Nay, though I granted a Deity, yet, if nothing of me subsisted after death, what laws could bind, what incentives could move me to common honesty? Annihilation would be a sanctuary for all my sins, and put an end to my crimes with myself. Believe me I am not so indifferent to the evils of the present life, but, without the expectation of a better, I should soon suspend the mechanism of my body, and resolve into inconscious atoms."

This early moment of his life proved to be its crisis, and the first step he took decided his after-progress. His first great work of "Christianity not Mysterious," produced immense consequences. Toland persevered in denying that it was designed as any attack on Christianity, but only on those subtractions, additions, and other alterations, which have corrupted that pure institution. The work, at least, like its title, is "Mysterious[2]." Toland passed over to Ireland, but his book having got there before him, the author beheld himself anathematised; the pulpits thundered, and it was dangerous to be seen conversing with him. A jury who confessed they could not comprehend a page of his book, condemned it to be burned. Toland now felt a tenderness for his person; and the humane Molyneux, the friend of Locke, while he censures the imprudent vanity of our author, gladly witnessed the flight of "the poor gentleman." But South,

[1] These letters will interest every religious person; they may be found in Toland's posthumous works, vol. ii. p. 295.

[2] Toland pretends to prove that "there is nothing in the Christian Religion, not only which is contrary to reason, but even which is above it."—He made use of some arguments (says Le Clerc) that were drawn from Locke's Treatise on Human Understanding. I have seen in MS. a finished treatise by Locke, on Religion, addressed to Lady Shaftesbury; Locke gives it as a translation from the French. I regret my account is so imperfect; but the possessor may, perhaps, be induced to give it to the public. The French philosophers have drawn their first waters from English authors; and Toland, Tindale, and Woolston, with Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, and Locke, were among their earliest acquisitions.

indignant at our English moderation in his own controversy with Sherlock on some doctrinal points of the Trinity, congratulates the Archbishop of Dublin on the Irish persecution; and equally witty and intolerant, he writes on Toland, "Your Parliament presently sent him packing, and, without the help of a *fagot*, soon made the kingdom *too hot* for him."

Toland was accused of an intention to found a sect, as South calls them, of "Mahometan-Christians." Many were stigmatised as *Tolandists*; but the disciples of a man who never procured for their prophet a bit of dinner or a new wig, for he was frequently wanting both, were not to be feared as enthusiasts. The persecution from the church only rankled in the breast of Toland, and excited unextinguishable revenge.

He now breathed awhile from the bonfire of theology; and our *Janus* turned his political face. He edited Milton's voluminous politics, and Harrington's fantastical Oceana, and, as his "Christianity not Mysterious" had stamped his religion with something worse than heresy, so in politics he was branded as a Commonwealth's-man. Toland had evidently strong nerves; for him, opposition produced controversy, which he loved, and controversy produced books, by which he lived.

But let it not be imagined that Toland affected to be considered as no Christian, or avowed himself as a republican. "Civil and religious toleration" (he says) "have been the two main objects of all my writings." He declares himself to be only a primitive Christian, and a pure whig. But an author must not be permitted to understand himself so much more clearly than he has enabled his readers to do. His mysterious conduct may be detected in his want of moral integrity.

He had the art of explaining away his own words, as in his first controversy about the word *mystery* in religion, and he exults in his artifice; for, in a letter, where he is soliciting the minister for employment, he says:—"The church is much exasperated against me; yet as that is the heaviest article, so it is undoubtedly the easiest conquered, and I know *the infallible method of doing it.*" And, in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he promises to *reform his religion to that prelate's liking!* He took the sacrament as an opening for the negotiation.

What can be more explicit than his recantation at the close of his *Vindicius Liberius?* After telling us that he had withdrawn from sale, after the second edition, his "'Christianity not Mysterious,' when I perceived what real or pretended offence it had given," he concludes thus:—"Being now arrived to years that will not wholly excuse inconsiderateness in resolving, or precipitance in acting, I firmly hope that my *persuasion* and *prac-*

tice will show me *to be a true Christian*; that my due *conformity* to the *public worship* may prove me to be *a good Churchman*; and that my untainted loyalty to King William will argue me to be a stanch Commonwealth's-man. That I shall continue all my life a friend to religion, an enemy to superstition, a supporter of good kings, and a deposer of tyrants."

Observe, this *Vindicius Liberius* was published on his return from one of his political tours in Germany. His views were then of a very different nature from those of controversial divinity; but it was absolutely necessary to allay the storm the church had raised against him. We begin now to understand a little better the character of Toland. These literary adventurers, with heroic pretensions, can practise the meanest artifices, and shrink themselves into nothing to creep out of a hole. How does this recantation agree with the "Nazarenus," and the other theological works which Toland was publishing all his life! Posterity only can judge of men's characters; it takes in at a glance the whole of a life; but contemporaries only view a part, often apparently unconnected and at variance, when in fact it is neither. This recantation is full of the spirit of *Janus Junius* Toland.

But we are concerned chiefly with Toland's literary character. He was so confirmed an author, that he never published one book without promising another. He refers to others in MS.; and some of his most curious works are posthumous. He was a great artificer of title-pages, covering them with a promising luxuriance; and in this way recommended his works to the booksellers. He had an odd taste for running inscriptions of whimsical crabbed terms; the gold-dust of erudition to gild over a title; such as "Tetradymus, Hodegus, Clidopharus;" "Adeisidaemon, or the Unsuperstitious." He pretends these affected titles indicated their several subjects; but the genius of Toland could descend to literary quackery.

He had the art of propagating books; his small life of Milton produced several; besides the complacency he felt in extracting long passages from Milton against the bishops. In this life, his attack on the authenticity of the *Eikon Basilike* of Charles I. branched into another on supposititious writings; and this included the spurious gospels. Association of ideas is a nursing mother to the fertility of authorship. The spurious gospels opened a fresh theological campaign, and produced his "Amyntor." There was no end in provoking an author, who, in writing the life of a poet, could contrive to put the authenticity of the Testament to the proof.

Amid his philosophical labours, his *vanity* induced him to seize on all temporary topics to which his facility and ingenuity gave currency. The choice of his subjects forms an amusing ca-

talogue; for he had "Remarks" and "Projects" as fast as events were passing. He wrote on "The Art of Governing by Parties," on "Anglia Libera," "Reasons for Naturalising the Jews," on "The Art of Canvassing at Elections," "On raising a National Bank without Capital," "The State Anatomy," "Dunkirk or Dover," etc. etc. These, and many like these, set off with catching titles, proved to the author that a man of genius may be capable of writing on all topics at all times, and make the country his debtor without benefiting his own creditors [1].

There was a moment in Toland's life, when he felt, or thought he felt, fortune in his grasp. He was then floating on the ideal waves of the South-sea bubble. The poor author, elated with a notion that he was rich enough to print at his own cost, dispersed copies of his absurd "Pantheisticon." He describes a society of Pantheists, who worship the universe as God; a mystery much greater than those he attacked in Christianity. Their prayers are passages from Cicero and Seneca, and they chant long poems instead of psalms; so that in their zeal they endured a little tediousness. The next objectionable circumstance in this wild ebullition of philosophical wantonness is, the apparent burlesque of some liturgies; and a wag having inserted in some copies an impious prayer to Bacchus, Toland suffered for the folly of others as well as his own [2]. With the South-sea bubble, vanished Toland's desire of printing books at his own risk; and thus relieved the world from the weight of more *Pantheisticons*!

With all this bustle of authorship, amidst temporary publications which required such prompt ingenuity, and elaborate works which matured the fruits of early studies, Toland was still not a sedentary writer. I find that he often travelled on the continent; but how could a guinealess author so easily transport himself from Flanders to Germany, and appear at home in the courts of Berlin, Dresden, and Hanover? Perhaps we may discover a

[1] In examining the original papers of Toland, which are preserved, I found some of his agreements with booksellers. For his description of Epsom he was to receive only four guineas in case 1000 were sold. He received ten guineas for his pamphlet on Naturalising the Jews, and ten guineas more in case Bernard Lintott sold 2000. The words of this agreement run thus: "Whenever Mr. Toland calls for ten guineas, after the first of February next, I promise to pay them, if I *cannot show* that 200 of the copies remain unsold." What a sublime person is an author! What a misery is authorship! The great philosopher who creates systems that are to alter the face of his country, must stand at the counter to count out 200 unsold copies!

[2] Des Maiseaux frees Toland from this calumny, and hints at his own personal knowledge of the author—but he does not know what a foreign writer authenticates, that this blasphemous address to Bacchus is a parody of a prayer in the Roman ritual, wrote two centuries before by a very proper society of *Pantheists*, a club of drunkards!

concealed feature in the character of our ambiguous philosopher.

In the only life we have of Toland, by Des Maiseaux, prefixed to his posthumous works, he tell us, that Toland was at the court of Berlin, but "an incident *too ludicrous to be mentioned,* obliged him to leave that place sooner than he expected." Here is an incident in a narrative clearly marked out, but never to be supplied! Whatever this incident was it had this important result, that it sent Toland away in haste; but *why* was he there? Our chronological biographer [1], "good easy man," suspects nothing more extraordinary when he tells us Toland was at Berlin or Hanover, than when he finds him at Epsom; imagines Toland only went to the electoral Princess Sophia, and the Queen of Prussia, who were "ladies of sublime genius," to entertain them by vexing some grave German divines, with philosophical conferences, and paradoxical conundrums; all the ravings of Toland's idleness [2].

This secret history of Toland can only be picked out by fine threads. He professed to be a literary character—he had opened a periodical "literary correspondence," as he terms it, with Prince Eugene; such as we have witnessed in our days by Grimm and La Harpe, addressed to some northern Princes. He was a favourite with the electoral Princess Sophia, and the Queen of Prussia, to whom he addressed his "Letters to Serena." Was he a political agent? Yet how was it that Toland was often driven home by distressed circumstances? He seems not to have been a practical politician, for he managed his own affairs very ill. Was the political intriguer rather a suspected, than a confidential servant of all his masters and mistresses? for it is evident no one cared for him! The absence of moral integrity was probably never disguised by the loquacious vanity of this literary adventurer.

In his posthumous works are several "Memorials" for the Earl of Oxford, which throw a new light over a union of political *Espionnage* with the literary character, which finally concluded

[1] Warburton has well described Des Maiseaux: "All the Life-writers we have had are, indeed, strange insipid creatures. The verbose tasteless Frenchman seems to lay it down as a principle that every life must be a book, and what is worse, it proves a book without a life; for what do we know of Boileau after all his tedious stuff?"

[2] One of these philosophical conferences has been preserved by Beausobre, who was indeed the party concerned. He inserted it in the "Bibliothèque Germanique," a curious literary journal, in 50 volumes, written by L'Enfant, Beausobre, and Formey. It is very copious, and very curious, and is preserved in the General Dictionary, art. Toland. The parties, after a warm contest, were very wisely interrupted by the Queen, when she discovered they had exhausted their learning, and were beginning to rail at each other.

in producing that extraordinary one, which the political imagination of Toland created in all the obscurity and heat of his reveries.

In one of these "Memorials," forcibly written and full of curiosity, Toland remonstrates with the minister for his marked neglect of him; opens the scheme of a political tour, where, like *Guthrie*, he would be content with his *quarterage*. He defines his character: for the independent Whig affects to spurn at the office, though he might not shrink at the duties of a spy.

"Whether such a person, sir, who is *neither minister nor spy*, and as a *lover of learning will be welcome everywhere*, may not prove of extraordinary use to my Lord Treasurer, as well as to his predecessor *Burleigh*, who employed such, I leave his lordship and you to consider."

Still *this character*, whatever title may designate it, is inferior in dignity and importance to that which Toland afterwards projected, and which portrays him where his life-writer has not given a touch from his brush; it is a political curiosity.

"I laid an honester scheme of serving my country, your lordship, and myself: for, seeing it was neither convenient for you, nor a thing at all desired by me, that *I should appear in any public post*, I sincerely proposed, as occasions should offer, to communicate to your lordship my observations on *the temper of the ministry, the dispositions of the people, the condition of our enemies, or allies abroad*, and what I might think *most expedient in every conjuncture*; which advice you were to follow in whole, or in part, or not at all, as your own superior wisdom should direct. My general acquaintance, the several languages I speak, the experience I have acquired in foreign affairs, and being engaged in no interest at home, besides that of the public, should qualify me in some measure for this province. ALL WISE MINISTERS HAVE EVER HAD SUCH PRIVATE MONITORS. As much as I thought myself fit, or was thought so by others, for such general observations, so much have I ever abhorred, my lord, *those particular observers we call* SPIES; but I despise the calumny no less than I detest the thing.—Of such general observations, you should have perused a far greater number than I thought fit to present hitherto, had I discovered, by due effects, that they were acceptable from *me*; for they must unavoidably be received from *somebody*, unless a minister were omniscient—yet I soon had good reason to believe I was not designed for the man; whatever the original sin could be that made me incapable of such a trust, and which I now begin to suspect. Without direct answers to my proposals, how could I know whether I helped my friends elsewhere, or betrayed them contrary to my intentions! and accordingly I have for some time been very cautious and reserved. But if your lordship will enter into any measures

with me, to procure *the good of my country*, I shall be more ready to *serve* your lordship in this, or in some becoming capacity, than any other minister. They who confided to my management affairs of a higher nature, have found me exact as well as secret. My impenetrable negotiation at Vienna (hid under the pretence of curiosity) was not only applauded by the prince that employed me, but also proportionably rewarded. And here, my lord, give me leave to say that I have found England miserably served abroad since this change; and our ministers at home are sometimes as great strangers to the genius as to the persons of those with whom they have to do.—At ——you have placed the most unacceptable man in the world, one that lived in a scandalous misunderstanding with the minister of the States at another court, one that has been the laughing-stock of all courts, for his senseless haughtiness, and most ridiculous airs, and one that can never judge aright, unless by accident, in anything."

The discarded, or the suspected *private Monitor of the Minister*, warms into the tenderest language of political amour, and mourns their rupture but as the quarrels of lovers.

"I cannot, from all these considerations, but in the nature of a lover, complain of your present neglect, and be solicitous for your future care." And again, "I have made use of the simile of a lover, and as such, indeed, I thought fit, once for all, to come to a thorough explanation, resolved, if my affection be not killed by your unkindness, to become indissolubly yours."

Such is the nice artifice which colours with a pretended love of his country, the sordidness of the political intriguer, giving clean names to filthy things. But this view of the political face of our *Janus* is not complete till we discover the levity he could carry into politics when not disguised by more pompous pretensions. I shall give two extracts from letters composed in a different spirit.

"I am bound for Germany, though first for Flanders, and next for Holland. I believe I shall be pretty well accommodated for this voyage, which I expect will be very short. Lord! how near was *my old woman* being a queen! and your humble servant being *at his ease*."

His *old woman* was the electoral Princess Sophia; and *his ease* is what patriots distinguish as *the love of their country*! Again—

"The October Club, if rightly managed, will be rare stuff *to work the ends of any party*. I sent such an account of these wights to an *old gentlewoman* of my acquaintance, as in the midst of fears (the change of ministry) will make her laugh."

After all his voluminous literature, and his refined politics, Toland lived and died the life of an Author by Profession, in an

obscure lodging at a country carpenter's, in great distress. He had still one patron left, who was himself poor, Lord Molesworth, who promised him, if he lived,

"Bare necessaries; these arre but cold comfort to a man of your spirit and desert; but 'tis all I dare promise! 'Tis an ungrateful age, and we must bear with it the best we may till we can mend it."

And his lordship tells of his unsuccessful application to some Whig lord for Toland; and concludes,

"'Tis a sad monster of a man, and not worthy of further notice."

I have observed that Toland had strong nerves; he neither feared controversies, nor that which closes all. Having examined his manuscripts, I can sketch a minute picture of the last days of our "author by profession." At the carpenter's lodgings he drew up a list of all his books—they were piled on four chairs, to the amount of 155—most of them works which evince the most erudite studies; and as Toland's learning has been very lightly esteemed, it may be worth notice that some of his MSS. were transcribed in Greek [1]. To this list he adds, "I need not recite those in the closet with the unbound books and pamphlets; nor my trunk, wherein are all my papers and MSS." I perceive he circulated his MSS. among his friends, for there is a list by him as he lent them, among which are ladies as well as gentlemen, *esprits forts!*

Never has author died more in character than Toland; he may be said to have died with a busy pen in his hand. Having suffered from an unskilful physician, he avenged himself in his own way; for there was found on his table an "Essay on Physic without

[1] I subjoin, for the gratification of the curious, the titles of a few of these books. Spanhemii Opera; Clerici Pentateuchus; Constantini Lexicon Græco-Latinum; Fabricii Codex Apocryphus Vet. et Nov. Test.; Synesius de Regno; Historia imaginum cœlestium Gosselini, 16 volumes; Caryophili Dissertationes; Vonde Hardt Ephemerides Philologicæ; Trismegisti Opera; Recoldus, et alia Mahomedica; all the works of Buxtorf; Salviani Opera; Reland de Relig. Mahomedica; Galli Opuscula Mythologica; Apollodori Bibliotheca; Palingenius; Apuleius; and every other classical author of antiquity. As he was then employed in his curious history of the Druids, of which only a specimen is preserved, we may trace his researches in the following books: Luydii Archæologia Britannica; Old Irish Testament, etc.; Maccurtin's History of Ireland; O'Flaherty's Ogygia; Epistolarum Hibernicarum; Usher's Religion of the ancient Irish; Brand's Isles of Orkney and Zetland; Pezron's Antiquités des Celtes.

There are some singular papers among these fragments. One title of a work is "Priesthood without Priestcraft; or Superstition distinguished from Religion, Dominion from Order, and Bigotry from Reason, in the most principle Controversies about Church government, which at present divide and deform Christianity." He has composed "A Psalm before Sermon in praise of Asinity." There are other singular titles and works in the mass of his papers.

Physicians." The dying patriot-trader was also writing a preface for a political pamphlet on *the danger of mercenary Parliaments*—and the philosopher was composing his own epitaph; one more proof of the ruling passion predominating in death; but why should a *Pantheist* be solicitous to perpetuate his genius and his fame! I shall transcribe a few lines; surely they are no evidence of Atheism!

" Omnium Literarum excultor,
ad linguarum plus decem sciens;
Veritatis propugnator,
Libertatis assertor;
nullus autem sectator aut cliens,
nec minis, nec malis est inflexus,
quin quam elegit, viam perageret;
utili honestum anteferens.
Spiritus cum æthereo patre,
à quo prodiit olim, conjungitur;
corpus item, Naturæ cedens,
in materno gremio reponitur.
Ipse vero æternum est resurrecturus,
at idem futurus TOLANDUS nunquam '."

One would have imagined that the writer of his own panegyrical epitaph would have been careful to have transmitted to posterity a copy of his features; but I know of no portrait of Toland. His patrons seem never to have been generous, nor his disciples grateful; they mortified rather than indulged the egotism of his genius. There appeared, indeed, an elegy, shortly after the death of Toland, so ingeniously contrived, that it is not clear whether he is eulogised or ridiculed. Amid its solemnity these lines betray the sneer. " Has," exclaimed the eulogist of the ambiguous philosopher,

" Each jarring element gone angry home?
And *Master Toland* a *Non-ens* become?"

LOCKE, with all the prescient sagacity of that clear understanding which penetrated under the secret folds of the human heart, anticipated the life of Toland at its commencement. He admired

' A lover of all literature,
and knowing more than ten languages;
a champion for truth,
an assertor of liberty,
but the follower or dependant of no man;
nor could menaces nor fortune bend him;
the way he had chosen he pursued,
preferring honesty to his interest.
His spirit is joined with its ethereal father
from whom it originally proceeded;
his body likewise, yielding to Nature,
is again laid in the lap of its mother;
but he is about to rise again in eternity,
yet never to be the same TOLAND more.

the genius of the man; but, while he valued his parts and learning, he dreaded their result. In a letter I find these passages, which were then so prophetic, and are now so instructive:—

"If his exceeding great value of himself do not deprive the world of that usefulness that his parts, if rightly conducted, might be of, I shall be very glad.—The hopes young men give, of what use they will make of their parts, is, to me, the encouragement of being concerned for them; but, *if vanity increases with age, I always fear whither it will lead a man.*"

GENIUS, THE DUPE OF ITS PASSIONS.

POPE said that STEELE, though he led a careless and vicious life, had nevertheless a love and reverence for virtue. The life of Steele was not that of a retired scholar; hence his moral character becomes more instructive. He was one of those whose hearts are the dupes of their imaginations, and who are hurried through life by the most despotic volition. He always preferred his caprices to his interests; or, according to his own notion, very ingenious, but not a little absurd, "he was always of the humour of preferring the state of his mind to that of his fortune." The result of this principle of moral conduct was, that a man of the most admirable abilities was perpetually acting like a fool, and, with a warm attachment to virtue, was the frailest of human beings.

In the first act of his life we find the seed that developed itself in the succeeding ones. His uncle could not endure a hero for his heir: but Steele had seen a marching regiment; a sufficient reason with him to enlist as a private in the horse-guards: cocking his hat, and putting on a broad-sword, jack-boots, and shoulder-belt, with the most generous feelings he forfeited a very good estate.—At length Ensign Steele's frank temper and wit conciliated esteem, and extorted admiration, and the ensign became a favourite leader in all the dissipations of the town. All these were the ebullitions of genius, which had not yet received a legitimate direction. Amid these orgies, however, it was often pensive, and forming itself; for it was in the height of these irregularities that Steele composed his "Christian Hero," a moral and religious treatise, which the contritions of every morning dictated, and to which the disorders of every evening added another penitential page. Perhaps the genius of Steele was never so ardent and so pure as at this period; and in his elegant letter to his commander, the celebrated Lord Cutts, he gives an inte-

resting account of the origin of this production, which none but one deeply imbued with its feelings could have so forcibly described.

" Tower Guard, March 23, 1701.

" My Lord,

" The address of the following papers is so very much due to your lordship, that they are but a mere report of what has passed upon my guard to my commander; for they were writ upon duty, when the mind was perfectly disengaged, and at leisure, in the silent watch of the night, to run over the busy dream of the day; and the vigilance which obliges us to suppose an enemy always near us, has awakened a sense that there is a restless and subtle one which constantly attends our steps, and meditates our ruin[1]."

To this solemn and monitory work he prefixed his name, from this honourable motive, that it might serve as "a standing testimony against himself, and make him ashamed of understanding, and seeming to feel what was virtuous, and living so quite contrary a life." Do we not think that no one less than a saint is speaking to us? And yet he is still nothing more than Ensign Steele! He tells us that this grave work made him considered, who had been no undelightful companion, as a disagreeable fellow—and "The Christian Hero," by his own words, appears to have fought off several fool-hardy geniuses who were for "trying their valour on him," supposing a saint was necessarily a poltroon. Thus "The Christian Hero," finding himself slighted by his loose companions, sat down and composed a most laughable comedy, "The Funeral; and with all the frankness of a man who cares not to hide his motives, he tells us, that after his religious work he wrote the comedy because "nothing can make the town so fond of a man as a successful play[2]." The historian who had to record such strange events, following close on each other, as an author publishing a book of piety, and then a farce, could never have discovered the secret motive of the versatile writer, had not that writer possessed the most honest frankness.

Steele was now at once a man of the town and its censor, and wrote lively essays on the follies of the day in an enormous black peruke which cost him fifty guineas! He built an elegant

[1] Mr. Nichols's "Epistolary Correspondence of Sir Richard Steele," vol. i. p. 77.

[2] Steele has given a delightful piece of self-biography, towards the end of his "Apology for himself and his writings," p. 80, 4to.

villa, but, as he was always inculcating economy, he dates from "The Hovel." He detected the fallacy of the South-sea scheme, while he himself invented projects, neither inferior in magnificence nor in misery. He even turned alchemist, and wanted to coin gold, merely to distribute it. The most striking incident in the life of this man of volition, was his sudden marriage with a young lady who attended his first wife's funeral—struck by her angelical beauty, if we trust to his raptures. Yet this sage, who would have written so well on the choice of a wife, united himself to a character the most uncongenial to his own; cold, reserved, and most anxiously prudent in her attention to money, she was of a temper which every day grew worse by the perpetual imprudence and thoughtlessness of his own. He calls her "Prue" in fondness and reproach; she was Prudery itself! His adoration was permanent, and so were his complaints; and they never parted but with bickerings—yet he could not suffer her absence, for he was writing to her three or four passionate notes in a day, which are dated from his office, or his bookseller's, or from some friend's house—he has risen in the midst of dinner to despatch a line to "Prue," to assure her of his affection since noon [1].—Her presence or her absence was equally painful to him.

[1] In the "Epistolary Correspondence of Sir Richard Steele," edition of 1809, are preserved these extraordinary love-despatches; "Prue" used poor Steele at times very ill; indeed Steele seems to have conceived that his warm affections were all she required, for Lady Steele was usually left whole days in solitude, and frequently in want of a guinea, when Steele could not raise one. He, however, sometimes remonstrates with her very feelingly. The following note is an instance:—

"DEAR WIFE,

"I have been in great pain of body and mind since I came out. You are extremely cruel to a generous nature, which has a tenderness for you that renders your least *dishumour* insupportably afflicting. After short starts of passion, not to be inclined to reconciliation, is what is against all rules of Christianity and justice. When I come home, I beg to be kindly received; or this will have as ill an effect upon my fortune, as on my mind and body."

In a postscript to another billet, he thus "sneers at Lady Steele's excessive attention to money":—

"Your man Sam owes me threepence, which must be deducted in the account between you and me; therefore, pray take care to get it, or stop it."

Such despatches as the following were sent off three or four times in a day:—

"I beg of you not to be impatient, though it be an hour before you see

"Your obliged husband,

"R. STEELE."

"DEAR PRUE,

"Don't be displeased that I do not come home till eleven o'clock.

"Yours, ever."

Yet Steele, gifted at all times with the susceptibility of genius, was exercising the finest feelings of the heart; the same generosity of temper which deluded his judgment, and invigorated his passions, rendered him a tender and pathetic dramatist; a most fertile essayist; a patriot without private views; an enemy whose resentment died away in raillery; and a friend, who could warmly press the hand that chastised him. Whether in administration, or expelled the house; whether affluent, or flying from his creditors; in the fulness of his heart he, perhaps, secured his own happiness, and lived on, like some wits, extempore. But such men, with all their virtues and all their genius, live only for themselves.

Steele, in the waste of his splendid talents, had raised sudden enmities and transient friendships. The world uses such men as Eastern travellers do fountains; they drink their waters, and when their thirst is appeased, turn their backs on them. Steele lived to be forgotten. He opened his career with folly; he hurried through it in a tumult of existence; and he closed it by an involuntary exile, amid the wrecks of his fortune and his mind.

Steele, in one of his numerous periodical works, the twelfth number of the Theatre, has drawn an exquisite contrast between himself and his friend Addison: it is a cabinet picture. Steele's careful pieces, when warm with his subject, had a higher spirit, a richer flavour, than the equable softness of Addison, who is only beautiful.

"There never was a more strict friendship than between these gentlemen; nor had they ever any difference but what proceeded from their different way of pursuing the same thing: the one, with patience, foresight, and temperate address, always

"DEAR PRUE,

"Forgive me dining abroad, and let Will carry the papers to Buckley's.

"Your fond devoted R. S."

"DEAR PRUE,

"I am very sleepy and tired, but could not think of closing my eyes till I had told you I am, dearest creature, your most affectionate, faithful husband,

"R. STEELE."

"From the Press, One in the morning."

It would seem by the following note, that this hourly account of himself was in consequence of the connubial mandate of his fair despot:—

"DEAR PRUE,

"It is a strange thing, because you are handsome, that you will not behave yourself with the obedience that people of worse features do—but that I must be always giving you an account of every trifle and minute of my time. I send this to tell you I am waiting to be sent for again when my Lord Wharton is stirring."

waited and stemmed the torrent; while the other often plunged himself into it, and was as often taken out by the temper of him who stood weeping on the bank for his safety, whom he could not dissuade from leaping into it. Thus these two men lived for some years last past, shunning each other, but still preserving the most passionate concern for their mutual welfare. But when they met, they were as unreserved as boys; and talked of the greatest affairs, upon which they saw where they differed, without pressing (what they knew impossible) to convert each other."

If Steele had the honour of the invention of those periodical papers which first enlightened the national genius by their popular instruction, he is himself a remarkable example of the moral and the literary character perpetually contending in the man of volition.

LITERARY DISAPPOINTMENTS D SORDERING THE INTELLECT.

LELAND AND COLLINS.

THIS awful calamity may be traced in the fate of LELAND and COLLINS: the one exhausted the finer faculties of his mind in the grandest views, and sunk under gigantic tasks; the other enthusiast sacrificed his reason and his happiness to his imagination.

LELAND, the father of our antiquaries, was an accomplished scholar; and his ample mind had embraced the languages of antiquity, those of his own age, and the ancient ones of his own country: thus he held all human learning by its three vast chains. He travelled abroad; and he cultivated poetry with the ardour he could even feel for the acquisition of words. On his return home, among other royal favours, he was appointed by Henry VIII. the king's antiquary, a title honourably created for Leland; for with him it became extinct. By this office he was empowered to search after English antiquities; to review the libraries of all the religious institutions, and to bring the records of antiquity "out of deadly darkness into lively light." This extensive power fed a passion already formed by the study of our old rude historians; his elegant taste perceived that they wanted those graces which he could lend them.

Six years were occupied, by uninterrupted travel and study, to survey our national antiquities; to note down everything observable for the history of the country and the honour of the nation. What a magnificent view has he sketched of this learned

journey! In search of knowledge, Leland wandered on the sea-coasts and in the midland; surveyed towns and cities, and rivers, castles, cathedrals, and monasteries; tumuli, coins, and inscriptions; collected authors; transcribed MSS. If antiquarianism pored, genius too meditated in this sublime industry.

Another six years were devoted to shape and to polish the immense collections he had amassed. All this untired labour and continued study were rewarded by Henry VIII. It is delightful, from its rarity, to record the gratitude of a patron: Henry was worthy of Leland; and the genius of the author was magnificent as that of the monarch who had created it.

Nor was the gratitude of Leland silent: he seems to have been in the habit of perpetuating his spontaneous emotions in elegant Latin verse. Our author has fancifully expressed his gratitude to the king:—

"Sooner," he says, "shall the seas float without their silent inhabitants; the thorny hedges cease to hide the birds; the oak to spread its boughs; and Flora to paint the meadows with flowers;

> "Quàm Rex dive, tuum labatur pectore nostro
> Nomen, quod studiis portus et aura meis."
>
> "Than thou, great King, my bosom cease to hail,
> Who o'er my studies breath'st a favouring gale."

Leland was, indeed, alive to the kindness of his royal patron; and among his numerous literary projects, was one of writing a history of all the palaces of Henry, in imitation of Procopius, who described those of the Emperor Justinian. He had already delighted the royal ear in a beautiful effusion of fancy and antiquarianism, in his *Cygnea Cantio*, the Song of the Swans. The swan of Leland, melodiously floating down the Thames, from Oxford to Greenwich, chants, as she passes along, the ancient names and honours of the towns, the castles, and the villages.

Leland presented his "Strena, or a New Year's Gift," to the King.—It consists of an account of his studies; and sketches, with a fervid and vast imagination, his magnificent labour, which he had already inscribed with the title *De Antiquitate Britannica,* and which was to be divided into as many books as there were shires. All parts of this address of the King's Antiquary to the King, bear the stamp of his imagination and his taste. He opens his intention of improving, by the classical graces of composition, the rude labours of our ancestors; for,

"Except Truth be delicately clothed in purpure, her written verytees can scant find a reader."

Our old writers, he tells his sovereign, had, indeed,

"From time to time preserved the acts of your predecessors,

and the fortunes of your realm, with great diligence, and no less faith; would to God with like eloquence!"

An exclamation of fine taste, when taste was yet a stranger in the country. And when he alludes to the knowledge of British affairs scattered among the Roman, as well as our own writers, his fervid fancy breaks forth with an image at once simple and sublime:

"I trust," says Leland, "so to open the window, that the light shall be seen so long, that is to say, by the space of a whole thousand years stopped up, and the old-glory of your Britain to re-flourish through the world [1]."

And he pathetically concludes,

"Should I live to perform those things that are already begun, I trust that your realm shall so well be known, once painted with its native colours, that it shall give place to the glory of no other region."

The grandeur of this design was a constituent part of the genius of Leland, but not less, too, was that presaging melancholy which even here betrays itself, and even more frequently in his verses. Everything about Leland was marked by his own greatness; his country and his countrymen were ever present; and, by the excitement of his feelings, even his humbler pursuits were elevated into patriotism. Henry died the year after he received "The New Year's Gift." From that moment, in losing the greatest patron for the greatest work, Leland appears to have felt the staff which he had used to turn at pleasure for his stay, break in his hands.

He had new patrons to court, while engaged in labours for which a single life had been too short. The melancholy that cherishes genius may also destroy it. Leland, brooding over his voluminous labours, seemed to love and to dread them; sometimes to pursue them with rapture, and sometimes to shrink from them with despair. His generous temper had once shot forwards to posterity; but he now calms his struggling hopes and doubts, and confines his literary ambition to his own country and his own age.

"POSTERITATIS AMOR DUBIUS.

"Posteritatis amor mihi perblanditur, et ultro
Promittit libris secula multa meis.

[1] Leland, in his magnificent plan, included several curious departments. Jealous of the literary glory of the Italians, whom he compares to the Greeks for accounting all nations barbarous and unlettered, he had composed four books "De Viris Illustribus," on English Authors, to force them to acknowledge the illustrious genius, and the great men of Britain. Three books "De Nobilitate Britannica," were to be "as an ornament and a right comely garland."

At non tam facile est oculato imponere, nosco
Quàm non sim tali dignus honore frui.
Græcia magniloquos vates desiderat ipsa,
Roma suos etiam disperiise dolet.
Exemplis quum sim claris edoctus ab istis,
Quî sperem Musas vivere posse meas?
Certè mî sat erit præsenti scribere sæclo,
Auribus et patriæ complacuisse meæ."

IMITATED.

" Posterity, thy soothing love I feel,
That o'er my volumes many an age may steal:
But hard it is the well-clear'd eye to cheat
With honours undeserved, too fond deceit!
Greece, greatly eloquent, and full of fame,
Sighs for the want of many a perish'd name;
And Rome o'er her illustrious children mourns,
Their fame departing with their mouldering urns.
How can I hope, by such examples shown,
More than a transient day, a passing sun?
Enough for me to win the present age,
And please a brother with a brother's page."

By other verses, addressed to Cranmer, it would appear that Leland was experiencing anxieties to which he had not been accustomed,—and one may suspect, by the opening image of his " Supellex," that his pension was irregular, and that he began, as authors do in these hard cases, to value " the furniture " of his mind above that of his house.

" AD THOMAM CRANMERUM,

CANT. ARCHIEPISCOP.

" Est congesta mihi domi Supellex
Ingens, aurea, nobilis, venusta,
Quâ totus studeo Britanniarum
Vero reddere gloriam nitori.
Sed Fortuna meis noverca cœptis
Jam felicibus invidet maligna.
Quare, ne pereant brevi vel horâ
Multarum mihi noctium labores
Omnes, et patriæ simul decora
Ornamenta cadant," etc. etc.

IMITATED.

" The furnitures that fill my house,
The vast and beautiful disclose,
All noble, and the store is gold;
Our ancient glory here unroll'd.
But fortune checks my daring claim,
A step-mother severe to fame.
A smile malignantly she throws
Just at the story's prosperous close.
And thus must the unfinish'd tale,
And all my many vigils fail,
And must my country's honour fall;
In one brief hour must perish all?"

But, conscious of the greatness of his labours, he would obtain the favour of the Archbishop, by promising a share of his own fame—

" —— pretium sequetur amplum—
Sic nomen tibi litteræ elegantes
Rectè perpetuum dabunt, suosque
Partim vel titulos tibi receptos
Concedet memori Britannus ore :
Sic te posteritas amabit omnis,
Et famâ super æthera innotesces."

IMITATED.

" But take the ample glorious meed,
To letter'd elegance decreed,
When Britain's mindful voice shall bend,
And with her own thy honours blend,
As she from thy kind hands receives
Her titles drawn on Glory's leaves,
And back reflects them on thy name,
Till time shall love thy mounting fame."

Thus was Leland, like the melancholic, withdrawn entirely into the world of his own ideas; his imagination delighting in reveries, while his industry was exhausting itself in labour. His manners were not free from haughtiness,—his meagre and expressive physiognomy indicates the melancholy and the majesty of his mind, it was not old age, but the premature wrinkles of those nightly labours he has himself recorded. All these characteristics are so strongly marked in the bust of Leland, that Lavater had triumphed had he studied it[1].

Labour had been long felt as voluptuousness by Leland; and this is among the Calamities of Literature, and it is so with all those studies which deeply busy the intellect and the fancy. There is a poignant delight in study, often subversive of human happiness. Men of genius, from their ideal state, drop into the cold formalities of society, to encounter its evils, its disappointments, its neglect, and perhaps its persecutions. When such minds discover the world will only become a friend on its own terms, then the cup of their wrath overflows; the learned grow morose, and the witty sarcastic, but more indelible emotions in a highly-excited imagination often produce those delusions, which Darwin calls hallucinations, and which sometimes terminate in mania. The haughtiness, the melancholy, and the aspiring genius of Leland, were tending to a disordered intellect. Incipient insanity is a mote floating in the under-

[1] What reason is there to suppose with Granger that his bust, so admirably engraven by Grignion, is supposititious? Probably struck by the premature old age of a man who died in his fortieth year, he condemned it by its appearance; but not with the eye of the physiognomist.

standing, escaping all observation, when the mind is capable of observing itself, but seems a constituent part of the mind itself when that is completely covered with its cloud.

Leland did not reach even the maturity of life, the period at which his stupendous works were to be executed. He was seized by frenzy. The causes of his insanity were never known. The Papists declared he went mad because he had embraced the new religion; his malicious rival Polydore Vergil, because he had promised what he could not perform; duller prosaists because his poetical turn had made him conceited. The grief and melancholy of a fine genius, and perhaps an irregular pension, his enemies have not noticed.

The ruins of Leland's mind were viewed in his library; volumes on volumes stupendously heaped together, and masses of notes scattered here and there; all the vestiges of his genius, and its distraction. His collections were seized on by honest and dishonest hands; many were treasured, but some were stolen. Hearne zealously arranged a series of volumes from the fragments; but the Britannia of Camden, the London of Stowe, and the Chronicles of Holinshed, are only a few of those public works whose waters silently welled from the spring of Leland's genius; and that nothing might be wanting to preserve some relic of that fine imagination which was always working in his poetic soul, his own description of his learned journey over the kingdom was a spark, which, falling into the inflammable mind of a poet, produced the singular and patriotic poem of the Polyolbion of Drayton. Thus the genius of Leland has come to us diffused through a variety of other men's; and what he intended to produce it has required many to perform.

A singular inscription, in which Leland speaks of himself, in the style he was accustomed to use, and which Weever tells us was affixed to his monument, as he had heard by tradition, was probably a relic snatched from his general wreck—for it could not with propriety have been composed after his death[1].

> "Quantùm Rhenano debet Germania docto
> Tantùm debebit terra Britanna mihi.
> Ille suæ gentis ritus et nomina prisca
> Æstivo fecit lucidiora die.
> Ipse antiquarum rerum quoque magnus amator
> Ornabo patriæ lumina clara meæ.
> Quæ cum prodierint niveis inscripta tabellis,
> Tum testes nostræ sedulitatis erunt."

[1] Ancient Funerall Monuments, p. 692.

IMITATED.

" What Germany to learn'd Rhenanus owes,
That for my Britain shall my toil unclose;
His volumes mark their customs, names, and climes,
And brighten, with a summer's light, old times.
I also, touch'd by the same love, will write,
To ornament my country's splendid light,
Which shall, inscribed on snowy tablets, be
Full many a witness of my industry."

Another example of literary disappointment disordering the intellect, may be contemplated in the fate of the poet COLLINS.

Several interesting incidents may be supplied to Johnson's narrative of the short and obscure life of this poet, who, more than any other of our martyrs to the lyre, has thrown over all his images and his thoughts a tenderness of mind, and breathed a freshness over the pictures of poetry, which the mighty Milton has not exceeded, and the laborious Gray has not attained. But he immolated happiness and at length reason, to his imagination! The incidents m interesting in the life of Collins would be those events which elude the ordinary biographer; that invisible train of emotions which were gradually passing in his mind; those passions which first moulded his genius, and which afterwards broke it! But who could record the vacillations of a poetic temper; its early hope, and its late despair; its wild gaiety, and its settled frenzy; but the poet himself? Yet Collins has left behind no memorial of the wanderings of his alienated mind, but the errors of his life!

At college he published his " Persian Eclogues," as they were first called, to which, when he thought they were not distinctly Persian, he gave the more general title of " Oriental." The publication was attended with no success; but the first misfortune a poet meets will rarely deter him from incurring more. He suddenly quitted the university, and has been censured for not having consulted his friends when he rashly resolved to live by the pen. But he had no friends! His father had died in embarrassed circumstances; and Collins was residing at the university on the stipend allowed him by his uncle, Colonel Martin, who was abroad. He was indignant at a repulse he met with at college; and alive to the name of author and poet, the ardent and simple youth imagined that a nobler field of action opened on him in the metropolis than was presented by the flat uniformity of a collegiate life. To whatever spot the youthful poet flies, that spot seems Parnassus, as applause seems patronage. He hurried to town, and presented himself before the cousin, who paid his small allowance from his uncle, in a fashionable dress, with a feather in his hat.

The graver gentleman did not succeed in his attempt at sending him back, with all the terror of his information, that Collins had not a single guinea of his own, and was dressed in a coat he could never pay for. The young bard turned from his obdurate cousin as "a dull fellow;" a usual phrase with him to describe those who did not think as he would have them.

That moment was now come, so much desired, and scarcely yet dreaded, which was to produce those effusions of fancy and learning, for which Collins had prepared himself by previous studies. About this time Johnson[1] has given a finer picture of the intellectual powers and the literary attainments of Collins, than in the life he afterwards composed. Collins was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages; "full of hopes and full of projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, and strong in retention." Such was the language of Johnson, when, warmed by his own imagination, he could write like Longinus; at that after-period, when assuming the austerity of critical discusssion for the lives of poets, even in the coldness of his recollections, he describes Collins as "a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties."

A chasm of several years remains to be filled. He was projecting works of labour, and creating productions of taste; and he has been reproached for irresolution, and even for indolence. Let us catch his feelings from the facts as they rise together, and learn whether Collins must endure censure or excite sympathy.

When he was living loosely about town, he occasionally wrote many short poems in the house of a friend, who witnesses that he burned as rapidly as he composed. His odes were purchased by Millar, yet though but a slight pamphlet, all the interest of that great bookseller could never introduce them into notice. Not an idle compliment is recorded to have been sent to the poet. When we now consider that among these odes was one the most popular in the language, with some of the most exquisitely poetical, it reminds us of the difficulty a young writer without connexions experiences in obtaining the public ear; and of the languor of poetical connoisseurs who sometimes suffer poems, that have not yet grown up to authority, to be buried on the shelf. What the outraged feelings of the poet were, appeared when some time afterwards he became rich enough to express them. Having obtained some fortune by the death of his uncle, he made good to the publisher the deficiency of the unsold odes and, in his haughty resentment at the public taste, consigned the impression to the flames!

[1] In a letter to Joseph Wharton.

Who shall now paint the feverish and delicate feelings of a young poet such as Collins, who had twice addressed the public, and twice had been repulsed? He whose poetic temper Johnson has finely painted, at the happy moment when he felt its influence, as "delighting to rove through the meadows of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, and repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens!"

It cannot be doubted, and the recorded facts will demonstrate it, that the poetical disappointments of Collins were secretly preying on his spirit, and repressing his firmest exertions. With a mind richly stored with literature, and a soul alive to the impulses of nature and study, he projected a "History of the Revival of Learning," and a translation of "Aristotle's Poetics," to be illustrated by a large commentary.

But "his great fault," says Johnson, "was his *irresolution*; or the frequent calls of *immediate necessity* broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose." Collins was, however, not idle, though without application; for, when reproached with idleness by a friend, he showed instantly several sheets of his version of Aristotle, and many embryos of some lives he had engaged to compose for the Biographia Britannica; he never brought either to perfection! What then was this *irresolution* but the vacillations of a mind broken and confounded? He hard exercised too constantly the highest faculties of fiction, and he had precipitated himself into the dreariness of real life. None but a poet can conceive, for none but a poet can experience, the secret wounds inflicted on a mind of romantic fancy and tenderness of emotion, which has staked its happiness on its imagination; for such neglect is felt as ordinary men would feel the sensation of being let down into a sepulchre, and buried alive. The mind of Tasso, a brother in fancy to Collins, became disordered by the opposition of the critics, but perpetual neglect injures it not less. The HOPE of the ancients was represented holding some flowers, the promise of the spring, or some spikes of corn, indicative of approaching harvest—but the HOPE of Collins had scattered its seed, and they remained buried in the earth.

The oblivion which covered our poet's works appeared to him eternal, as those works now seem to us immortal. He had created HOPE with deep and enthusiastic feeling!—

> "With eyes so fair—
> Whispering promised pleasure,
> And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail;
> And Hope, enchanted, smiled, and waved her golden hair!"

The few years Collins passed in the metropolis he was sub-

sisting with or upon his friends; and, being a pleasing companion, he obtained many literary acquaintances. It was at this period that Johnson knew him, and thus describes him:—"His appearance was decent, and his knowledge considerable; his views extensive, and his conversation elegant." He was a constant frequenter at the literary resorts of the Bedford and Slaughter's; and Armstrong, Hill, Garrick, and Foote, frequently consulted him on their pieces before they appeared in public. From his intimacy with Garrick he obtained a free admission into the green-room; and probably it was at this period, among his other projects, that he planned several tragedies, which, however, as Johnson observes, "he only planned." There is a feature in Collins's character which requires attention. He is represented as a man of cheerful dispositions; and it has been my study to detect only a melancholy, which was preying on the very source of life itself. Collins was, indeed, born to charm his friends; for fancy and elegance were never absent from his susceptible mind, rich in its stores and versatile in its emotions. He himself indicates his own character, in his address to "Home:"—

> "Go! nor, regardless while these numbers boast
> My short-lived bliss, forget my social name."

Johnson has told us of his cheerful dispositions; and one who knew him well observes, that "in the green-room he made diverting observations on the vanity and false consequence of that class of people, and his manner of relating them to his particular friends was extremely entertaining; but the same friend acknowledges that "some letters which he received from Collins, though chiefly on business, have in them some flights which strongly mark his character, and for which reason I have preserved them." We cannot decide of the temper of a man viewed only in a circle of friends, who listen to the ebullitions of wit or fancy; the social warmth for a moment throws into forgetfulness his secret sorrow. The most melancholy man is frequently the most delightful companion, and peculiarly endowed with the talent of satirical playfulness and vivacity of humour[1]. But what was the true life of Collins, separated from

[1] Burton, the author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy," offers a striking instance. Bishop Kennett, in his curious "Register and Chronicle," has preserved the following particulars of this author. "In an interval of vapours *he would be extremely pleasant, and raise laughter in any company.* Yet I have heard, that nothing at last could make him laugh, but, going down to the Bridge-foot at Oxford, and hearing the bargemen scold and storm and swear at one another; at which he would set his hands to his sides, and laugh most profusely; yet in his chamber so mute and mopish, that he was suspected to be *felo de*

its adventitious circumstances? It was a life of want, never chequered by hope, that was striving to elude its own observation by hurrying into some temporary dissipation. But the hours of melancholy and solitude were sure to return; these were marked on the dial of his life, and, when they struck, the gay and lively Collins, like one of his own enchanted beings, as surely relapsed into his natural shape. To the perpetual recollection of his poetical disappointments, are we to attribute this unsettled state of his mind, and the perplexity of his studies. To these he was perpetually reverting, which he showed when after a lapse of several years, he could not rest till he had burned his ill-fated odes. And what was the result of his literary life? He returned to his native city of Chichester in a state almost of nakedness, destitute, diseased, and wild in despair, to hide himself in the arms of a sister.

The clould had long been gathering over his convulsed intellect; and the fortune he acquired on the death of his uncle served only for personal indulgences, which rather accelerated his disorder. There were, at times, some awful pauses in the alienation of his mind—but he had withdrawn it from study. It was in one of these intervals that Thomas Warton told Johnson that when he met Collins travelling, he took up a book the poet carried with him, from curiosity, to see what companion a man of letters had chosen—it was an English Testament. "I have but one book," said Collins, "but that is the best." This circumstance is recorded on his tomb.

> "He join'd pure faith to strong poetic powers,
> And in reviving reason's lucid hours,
> Sought on one book his troubled mind to rest,
> And rightly deem'd the book of God the best."

At Chichester, tradition has preserved some striking and affecting occurrences of his last days; he would haunt the aisles and cloisters of the cathedral, roving days and nights together, loving their

> "Dim religious light."

And, when the choristers chanted their anthem, the listening and bewildered poet, carried out of himself by the solemn strains, and his own too susceptible imagination, moaned and shrieked,

se." With what a fine strain of poetic feeling has a modern bard touched this subject!—

> "As a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow,
> While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below,
> So the cheek may be tinged with a warm sunny smile,
> Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while."
>
> MOORE'S Irish Melodies.

and awoke a sadness and a terror most affecting amid religious emotions; their friend, their kinsman, and their poet, was before them, an awful image of human misery and ruined genius!

This interesting circumstance is thus alluded to on his monument:—

"Ye walls that echoed to his frantic moan,
Guard the due record of this grateful stone:
Strangers to him, enamour'd of his lays,
This fond memorial of his talents raise."

A voluntary subscription raised the monument to Collins. The genius of Flaxman has thrown out on the eloquent marble all that fancy would consecrate; the tomb is itself a poem.

There Collins is represented as sitting in a reclining posture, during a lucid interval of his afflicting malady, with a calm and benign aspect, as if seeking refuge from his misfortunes in the consolations of the Gospel, which lie open before him, whilst his lyre, and "the Ode on the Passions," as a scroll, are thrown together neglected on the ground. Upon the pediment on the tablet are placed in relief two female figures of LOVE and PITY, entwined each in the arms of the other; the proper emblems of the genius of his poetry.

Langhorne, who gave an edition of Collins's poems with all the fervour of a votary, made an observation not perfectly correct:—"It is observable," he says, "that none of his poems bear the marks of an amorous disposition; and that he is one of those few poets who have sailed to Delphi, without touching at Cythera. In the 'Ode to the Passions,' *Love* has been omitted." There indeed, Love does not form an important personage; yet, at the close, *Love* makes his transient appearance with *Joy* and *Mirth*—"a gay fantastic rond."

"And, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings."

It is certain, however, that Collins considered the amatory passion as unfriendly to poetic originality; for he alludes to the whole race of the Provençal poets, by accusing them of only employing

"Love, only love, her forceless numbers mean."

Collins affected to slight the urchin; for he himself had been once in love, and his wit has preserved the history of his passion; he was attached to a young lady who was born the day before him, and who seems not to have been very poetically

tempered, for she did not return his ardour. On that occasion, he said "that he came into the world *a day after the fair*."

Langhorne composed two sonnets, which seem only preserved in the Monthly Review, in which he was a writer, and where he probably inserted them; they bear a particular reference to the misfortunes of our poet. In one he represents Wisdom, in the form of Addison, reclining in "the old and honoured shade of Magdalen," and thus addressing

> "The poor shade of Collins, wandering by;
> The tear stood trembling in his gentle eye,
> With modest grief reluctant, while he said—
> 'Sweet bard, belov'd by every muse in vain!
> With pow'rs, whose fineness wrought their own decay;
> Ah! wherefore, thoughtless, didst thou yield the rein
> To fancy's will, and chase the meteor ray?
> Ah! why forget thy own Hyblæan strain,
> Peace rules the breast, where Reason rules the day.'"

The last line is most happily applied; it is a verse by the unfortunate bard himself; which heightens the contrast with his forlorn state! Langhorne has feelingly painted the fatal indulgences of such a character as Collins.

> "Of fancy's too prevailing power beware!
> Oft has she bright on life's fair morning shone;
> Oft seated Hope on Reason's sovereign throne,
> Then closed the scene, in darkness and despair.
> Of all her gifts, of all her powers possest,
> Let not her flattery win thy youthful ear,
> Nor vow long faith to such a various guest,
> False at the last, tho' now perchance full dear;
> The casual lover with her charms is blest,
> But woe to them her magic bands that wear!"

The criticism of Johnson on the poetry of Collins, that "as men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure," might almost have been furnished by the lumbering pen of old Dennis. But Collins from the poetical never *extorts* praise, for it is given *spontaneously*; he is much *more loved* than *esteemed*, for he does not give *little pleasure*. Johnson, too, describes "his lines as of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants." Even this verbal criticism, though it appeals to the eye, and not to the ear, is false criticism; since Collins is certainly the most musical of poets. How could that Lyrist be harsh in his diction, who almost draws tears from our eyes, while his melodious lines and picturing epithets are remembered by his readers? He is devoured with as much enthusiasm by one party as he is imperfectly relished by the other.

Johnson has given two characters of this poet; the one com-

posed at a period when that great critic was still susceptible of the seduction of the imagination; but even in this portrait, though some features of the poet are impressively drawn, the likeness is incomplete, for there is not even a slight indication of the chief feature in Collins's genius, his tenderness and delicacy of emotion, and his fresh and picturesque creative strokes. Nature had denied to Johnson's robust intellect the perception of these poetic qualities. He was but a stately ox in the fields of Parnassus, not the animal of nature. Many years afterwards, during his poetical biography, that long Lent of criticism, in which he mortified our poetical feelings by accommodating his to the populace of critics,—so faint were former recollections, and so imperfect were even those feelings which once he seemed to have possessed,—that he could then do nothing but write on Collins with much less warmth than he has written on Blackmore. Johnson is, indeed, the first of critics, when his powerful logic investigates objects submitted to reason; but great sense is not always combined with delicacy of taste; and there is in poetry a province which Aristotle himself may never have entered.

THE REWARDS OF ORIENTAL STUDENTS.

At a time when oriental studies were in their infancy in this country, Simon Ockley, animated by the illustrious example of Pococke, and the laborious diligence of Prideaux, devoted his life and his fortune to these novel researches, which necessarily involved both. With that enthusiasm which the ancient votary experienced, and with that patient suffering the modern martyr has endured, he pursued, till he accomplished, the useful object of his labours. He, perhaps, was the first who exhibited to us other heroes than those of Rome and Greece; sages as contemplative, and a people more magnificent even than the iron masters of the world. Among other oriental productions, his most considerable is "The History of the Saracens." The first volume appeared in 1708, and the second ten years afterwards. In the preface to the last volume, the oriental student pathetically counts over his sorrows, and triumphs over his disappointments; the most remarkable part is the date of the place from whence this preface was written—he triumphantly closes his labours in the confinement of Cambridge Castle for debt!

Ockley, lamenting his small proficiency in the Persian studies, resolves to attain to them:—

"How often have I endeavoured to perfect myself in that language, but my malignant and envious stars still frustrated my attempts; but they shall sooner alter their courses than extinguish my resolution of quenching that thirst, which the little I have had of it hath already excited."

And he states the deficiencies of his history with the most natural modesty.

"Had I not been forced to snatch everything that I have, as it were, out of the fire, our Saracen history should have been ushered into the world after a different manner." He is fearful that something would be ascribed to his indolence or negligence, that "ought more justly to be attributed to the influence of inexorable necessity. Could I have been master of my own time and circumstances?"

Shame on those pretended patrons who, appointing "a professor of the oriental languages," counteract the purpose of the professorship by their utter neglect of the professor, whose stipend cannot keep him on the spot where only he ought to dwell. And Ockley complains also of that hypocritical curiosity which pretends to take an interest in things it cares little about; perpetually inquiring, as soon as a work in announced, when it is to come out. But these Pharisees of literature, who can only build sepulchres to ancient prophets, never believe in a living one. Some of these, Ockley met with on the publication of his first volume: they run it down as the strangest story they had ever heard; they had never met with such folks as the Arabians! "A reverend dignitary asked me, if, when I wrote that book, I had not lately been reading the history of Oliver Cromwell?" Such was the plaudit the oriental student received, and returned to grow pale over his MSS. But when Petis de la Croix, observes Ockley, was pursuing the same track of study, in the patronage of Louis XIV., he found books, leisure, and encouragement; and when the great Colbert desired him to compose the life of Genkis Chan, he considered a period of ten years not too much to be allowed the author. And then Ockley proceeds: —

"But my unhappy condition hath always been widely different from anything that could admit of such an exactness. Fortune seems only to have given me a taste of it out of spite, on purpose that I might regret the loss of it."

He describes his two journeys to Oxford, for his first volume; but in his second, matters fared worse with him:

"Either my domestic affairs were grown much worse, or I less able to bear them; or what is more probable, both."

Ingenuous confession! fruits of a life devoted in its struggles, to important literature! and we murmur when genuis is irritable, and erudition is morose! But let us proceed with Ockley:

"I was forced to take the advantage of the slumber of my cares, that never slept when I was awake; and if they did not incessantly interrupt my studies, were sure to succeed them with no less constancy than night doth the day."

This is the cry of agony. He who reads this without sympathy, ought to reject these volumes as the idlest he ever read; and honour me with his contempt. The close of Ockley's preface shows a love-like tenderness for his studies; although he must quit life without bringing them to perfection, he opens his soul to posterity, and tells them, in the language of prophecy, that if they will bestow encouragement on our youth, the misfortunes he has described will be remedied. He, indeed, was aware that these students—

"Will hardly come in upon the prospect of finding leisure, in a prison, to transcribe those papers for the press which they have collected with indefatigable labour, and oftentimes at the expense of their rest, and all the other conveniences of life, for the service of the public."

Yet the exulting martyr of literature, at the moment he is fast bound to the stake, does not consider a prison so dreadful a reward for literary labours.—

"I can assure them, from my own experience, that I have enjoyed more true liberty, more happy leisure, and more solid repose in six months here, than in thrice the same number of years before. Evil is the condition of that historian who undertakes to write the lives of others, before he knows how to live himself. Yet I have no just reason to be angry with the world; I never stood in need of its assistance in my life, but I found it always very liberal of its advice; for which I am so much the more beholden to it, by how much the more I did always in my judgment give the possession of wisdom the preference to that of riches [1]."

[1] Dr. Edmund Castell offers a remarkable instance to illustrate our present investigation. He more than devoted his life to his "Lexicon Heptaglotton." It is not possible, if there are tears that are to be bestowed on the afflictions of learned men, to read his pathetic address to Charles II., and forbear them. He laments the seventeen years of incredible pains, during which he thought himself idle when he had not devoted sixteen or eighteen hours a day to this labour; that he had expended all his inheritance (it is said more than twelve thousand pounds); that it had broken his constitution, and left him blind as well as poor. When this invaluable Polyglott was published, the copies remained unsold in his hands; for the learned Castell had anticipated the curiosity and knowledge of the public by a full century. He had so completely devoted himself to Oriental studies, that they had a very remarkable consequence, for he had totally forgotten his own language, and could scarcely spell a single word. This appears in some of his English letters, preserved by Mr. Nichols in his valuable "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," vol. iv. Five hundred of these Lexicons, unsold at the time of his death, were placed, by Dr. Castell's

Poor Ockley, always a student, and rarely what is called a man of the world, once encountered a literary calamity which frequently occurs when an author finds himself among the vapid triflers and the polished cynics of the fashionable circle. Something like a patron he found in Harley, the Earl of Oxford, and once had the unlucky honour of dining at the table of my Lord Treasurer. It is probable that Ockley, from retired habits and severe studies, was not at all accomplished in the *suaviter in modo,* of which greater geniuses than Ockley have so surlily despaired. How he behaved I cannot narrate; probably he delivered himself with as great simplicity at the table of the Lord Treasurer, as on the wrong side of Cambridge Castle gate. The embarrassment this simplicity drew him into, is very fully stated in the following copious apology he addressed to the Earl of Oxford, which I have transcribed from the original; perhaps it may be a useful memorial to some men of letters as little polished as the learned Ockley :—

" Cambridge, July 15, 1714.

" My Lord,

" I was so struck with horror and amazement two days ago, that I cannot possibly express it. A friend of mine showed me a letter, part of the contents of which were, 'That Professor Ockley had given such extreme offence by some uncourtly answers to some gentlemen at my Lord Treasurer's table, that it would be in vain to make any further application to him.'

" My Lord, it is impossible for me to recollect, at this distance of time. All that I can say is this : that, as on the one side for a man to come to his patron's table with a design to affront either him or his friends, supposes him a perfect natural, a mere idiot; so on the other side it would be extreme severe, if a person whose education was far distant from the politeness of a court, should, upon the account of an unguarded expression, or some little inadvertency in his behaviour, suffer a capital sentence.

" Which is my case, if I have forfeited your Lordship's favour; which God forbid! That man is involved in double ruin

niece, in a room so little regarded, that scarcely one complete copy escaped the rats, and " the whole load of learned rags sold only for seven pounds." The work at this moment would find purchasers, I believe, at forty or fifty pounds.— The learned Sale, who first gave the world a genuine version of the Koran, and who had so zealously laboured in forming that " Universal History" which was the pride of our country, pursued his studies through a life of want—and this great Orientalist, (I grieve to degrade the memoirs of a man of learning by such mortifications,) when he quitted his studies too often wanted a change of linen, and often wandered in the streets in search of some compassionate friend who would supply him with the meal of the day!

that is not only forsaken by his friend, but, which is the unavoidable consequence, exposed to the malice and contempt, not only of enemies, but, what is still more grievous, of all sorts of fools.

"It is not the talent of every well-meaning man to converse with his superiors with due decorum; for, either when he reflects upon the vast distance of their station above his own, he is struck dumb and almost insensible; or else their condescension and courtly behaviour encourages him to be too familiar. To steer exactly between these two extremes requires not only a good intention, but presence of mind, and long custom.

"Another article in my friend's letter was, 'That somebody had informed your Lordship, that I was a very sot.' When first I had the honour to be known to your Lordship, I could easily foresee that there would be persons enough that would envy me upon that account, and do what in them lay to traduce me. Let Haman enjoy never so much himself, it is all nothing, it does him no good, till poor Mordecai is hanged out of his way.

"But I never feared the being censured upon that account. Here in the University, I converse with none but persons of the most distinguished reputations both for learning and virtue, and receive from them daily as great marks of respect and esteem, which I should not have, if that imputation were true. It is most certain that I do indulge myself the freedom of drinking a cheerful cup, at proper seasons, among my friends; but no otherwise than is done by thousands of honest men who never forfeit their character by it. And whoever doth no more than so, deserves no more to be called a sot, that a man that eats a hearty meal would be willing to be called a glutton.

"As for those detractors, if I have but the least assurance of your Lordship's favour, I can very easily despise them. They are *Nati consumere fruges*. They need not trouble themselves about what other people do; for whatever they eat and drink, it is only robbing the poor. Resigning myself entirely to your Lordship's goodness and pardon, I conclude this necessary apology with like provocation, That *I would be content he should take my character from any person that had a good one of his own.*

"I am, with all submission,

"My Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient, etc.

"SIMON OCKLEY."

To the honour of the Earl of Oxford, this unlucky piece of awkwardness at table, in giving "uncourtly answers," did not interrupt his regard for the poor Oriental student; for several

years afterwards the correspondence of Ockley was still acceptable to the Earl.

If the letters of the widows and children of many of our eminent authors were collected, they would demonstrate the great fact, that the man who is a husband or a father ought not to be an author. They might weary with a monotonous cry, and usually would be dated from the gaol or the garret. I have seen an original letter from the widow of Ockley to the Earl of Oxford, in which she lays before him the deplorable situation of her affairs; the debts of the Professor being beyond what his effects amounted to, the severity of the creditors would not even suffer the executor to make the best of his effects; the widow remained destitute of necessaries, incapable of assisting her children[1].

Thus students have devoted their days to studies worthy of a student. They are public benefactors, yet find no friend in the public, who cannot yet appreciate their value—Ministers of state know it, though they have rarely protected them. Ockley, by letters I have seen, was frequently employed by Bolingbroke to translate letters from the Sovereign of Morocco to our court; yet all the debts for which he was emprisoned in Cambridge castle did not exceed two hundred pounds. The public interest is concerned in stimulating such enthusiasts; they are men who cannot be salaried, who cannot be created by letters patent; for they are men who infuse their soul into their studies, and breathe their fondness for them in their last agonies. Yet such are doomed to feel their life pass away like a painful dream!

Those who know the value of LIGHTFOOT'S Hebraic studies, may be startled at the impediments which seem to have annihilated them. In the following effusion he confides his secret agitation to his friend Buxtorf: "A few years since I prepared a little commentary on the first epistle to the Corinthians, in the same style and manner as I had done that on Matthew. But it laid by me two years or more, nor can I now publish it, but at my own charges and to my great damage, which I felt enough

[1] The following are extracts from Ockley's letters to the Earl of Oxford, which I copy from the originals:—

"*Cambridge Castle, May* 2, 1717.

"I am here in the prison for debt, which must needs be an unavoidable consequence of the distractions in my family. I enjoy more repose, indeed, here, than I have tasted these many years, but the circumstance of a family oblige me to go out as soon as I can."

"*Cambridge, Sept.* 7, 1717.

"I have at last found leisure in my confinement to finish my Saracen history, which I might have hoped for in vain in my perplexed circumstances."

and too much in the edition of my book upon Mark. Some progress I have made in the gospel of St. Luke, but I can print nothing but at my own cost; thereupon I wholly give myself to reading, scarce thinking of writing more : for booksellers and printers have dulled my edge, who will print no book, especially Latin, unless they have an assured and considerable gain."

These writings and even the fragments have been justly appreciated by posterity, and a recent edition of all Lightfoot's works in many volumes have received honours which their despairing author never contemplated.

DANGER INCURRED BY GIVING THE RESULT OF LITERARY ENQUIRIES.

An author occupies a critical situation, for, while he is presenting the world with the result of his profound studies and his honest enquiries, it may prove pernicious to himself. By it he may incur the risk of offending the higher powers, and witnessing his own days embittered. Liable, by his moderation or his discoveries, by his scruples or his assertions, by his adherence to truth, or by the curiosity of his speculations, to be persecuted by two opposite parties, even when the accusations of the one necessarily nullify the other; such an author will be fortunate to be permitted to retire out of the circle of the bad passions; but he crushes in silence and voluntary obscurity all future efforts—and thus the nation lose a valued author.

This case is exemplified by the history of Dr. COWEL's curious work "The Interpreter." The book itself is a treasure of our antiquities, illustrating our national manners. The author was devoted to his studies, and the merits of his work recommended him to the Archbishop of Canterbury; in the Ecclesiastical Court he practised as a civilian, and became there eminent as a judge.

Cowel gave his work with all the modesty of true learning; for who knows his deficiencies so well in the subject on which he has written, as that author who knows most? It is delightful to listen to the simplicity and force with which an author in the reign of our first James opens himself without reserve.

"My true end is the advancement of knowledge; and therefore have I published this poor work, not only to impart the good thereof to those young ones that want it, but also to draw from the learned the supply of my defects. Whosoever will charge these my travels [labours] with many over-sights, he shall need no solemn pains to prove them. And upon the view

taken of this book sithence the impression, I dare assure them that shall observe most faults therein, that I, by gleaning after him, will gather as many omitted by him, as he shall show committed by me. What a man saith well is not, however, to be rejected because he hath some errors; reprehend who will, in God's name, that is, with sweetness and without reproach. So shall he reap hearty thanks at my hands, and thus more soundly help in a few months, than I by tossing and tumbling my books at home, could possibly have done in many years."

This extract discovers Cowel's amiable character as an author. But he was not fated to receive "sweetness without reproach."

Cowel encountered an unrelenting enemy in Sir Edward Coke, the famous attorney-general of James I., the commentator of Littleton. As a man, his name ought to arouse our indignation, for his licentious tongue, his fierce brutality, and his cold and tasteless genius. He whose vileness could even ruffle the great spirit of Rawleigh, was the shameless persecutor of the learned Cowel.

Coke was the oracle of the common law, and Cowel of the civil; but Cowel practised at Westminster Hall, as well as at Doctors' Commons. Coke turned away, with hatred, from an advocate who, with the skill of a great lawyer, exerted all the courage. The attorney-general sought every occasion to degrade him, and, with puerile derision, attempted to fasten on Dr. Cowel the nickname of *Dr. Cowheel.* Coke, after having written in his Reports whatever he could against our author, with no effect, started a new project. Coke well knew his master's jealousy on the question of his prerogative; and he touched the King on that nerve. The attorney-general suggested to James that Cowel had discussed "too nicely the mysteries of his monarchy, in some points derogatory to the supreme power of his crown; asserting that the royal prerogative was in some cases limited." So subtly the serpent whispered to the feminine ear of a monarch, whom this vanity of royalty startled with all the fears of a woman. This suggestion had nearly occasioned the ruin of Cowel— it verged on treason; and if the conspiracy of Coke now failed, it was through the mediation of the archbishop, who influenced the King; but it succeeded in alienating the royal favour from Cowel.

When Coke found he could not hang Cowel for treason, it was only a small disappointment, for he had hopes to secure his prey by involving him in felony. As physicians in desperate cases sometimes reverse their mode of treatment, so Coke now operated on an opposite principle. He procured a party in the Commons to declare that Cowel was a betrayer of the rights and liberties of the people; that he had asserted the King was inde-

pendent of Parliament, and that it was a favour to admit the consent of his subjects in giving of subsidies, etc.; and, in a word, that he drew his arguments from the Roman Imperial Code, and would make the laws and customs of Rome and Constantinople, those of London and York. Passages were wrested to Coke's design. The prefacer of Cowel's book very happily expresses himself when he says, "When a suspected book is brought to the torture, it often confesseth all, and more than it knows."

The Commons proceeded criminally against Cowel; and it is said his life was required, had not the King interposed. The author was imprisoned, and the book was burnt.

On this occasion was issued "a proclamation, touching Dr. Cowel's book, called The Interpreter." It may be classed among the most curious documents of our literary history. I do not hesitate to consider this proclamation as the composition of James I.

I will preserve some passages from this proclamation, not merely for their majestic composition, which may still be admired, and the singularity of the ideas, which may still be applied —but for the literary event to which it gave birth, in the appointment of a royal licenser for the press.—Proclamations and burning of books are the strong efforts of a weak government, exciting rather than suppressing public attention.

"This later age and times of the world wherein we are fallen, is so much given to verbal profession, as well of religion as of all commendable royal virtues, but wanting the actions and deeds agreeable to so specious a profession; as it hath bred such an unsatiable curiosity in many men's spirits, and such an itching in the tongues and pens of most men, as nothing is left unsearched to the bottom, both in talking and writing. For, from the very highest mysteries in the Godhead, and the most inscrutable counsels in the Trinity, to the very lowest pit of hell, and the confused actions of the devils there, there is nothing now unsearched into by the curiosity of men's brains. Men, not being contented with the knowledge of so much of the will of God as it hath pleased him to reveal; but they will needs sit with him in his most private closet, and become privy of his most inscrutable counsels. And, therefore, it is no wonder that men, in these our days, do not spare to wade in all the deepest mysteries that belong to the persons or state of kings and princes, that are gods upon earth; since we see (as we have already said) that they spare not God himself. And this licence, which every talker or writer now assumeth to himself, is come to this abuse; that many Phormios will give counsel to Hannibal, and many men that never went of the compass of cloysters or colleges,

will freely wade, by their writings, in the deepest mysteries of monarchy and politick government. Whereupon it cannot otherwise fall out, but that when men go out of their element, and meddle with things above their capacity, themselves shall not only go astray and stumble in darkness, but will mislead also divers others with themselves into many mistakings and errors; the proof whereof we have lately had by a book written by Dr. Cowel, called The Interpreter."

The royal reviewer then in a summary way shows how Cowel had, "by meddling in matters beyond his reach, fallen into many things to mistake and deceive himself." The book is therefore "prohibited; the buying, uttering, or reading it;" and those "who have any copies are to deliver the same presently upon this publication to the Mayor of London," etc., and the proclamation concludes with instituting licensers of the press:—

"Because that there shall be better oversight of books of all sorts before they come to the press, we have resolved to make choice of commissioners, that shall look more narrowly into the nature of all those things that shall be put to the press, and from whom a more strict account shall be yielded unto us, than hath been used heretofore."

What were the feelings of our injured author, whose integrity was so firm, and whose love of study was so warm, when he reaped for his reward the displeasure of his sovereign, and the indignation of his countrymen—accused at once of contradictory crimes, he could not be a betrayer of the rights of the people, and at the same time limit the sovereign power. Cowel retreated to his college, and, like a wise man, abstained from the press; he pursued his private studies, while his inoffensive life was a comment on Coke's inhumanity, more honourable to Cowel than any of Coke's on Littleton.

Thus Cowel saw, in his own life, its richest labour thrown aside; and when the author and his adversary were no more, it became a treasure valued by posterity! It was printed in the reign of Charles I., under the administration of Cromwell, and again after the Restoration. It received the honour of a foreign edition. Its value is still permanent. Such is the history of a book, which occasioned the disgrace of its author, and embittered his life.

A similar calamity was the fate of honest STOWE, the Chronicler. After a long life of labour, and having exhausted his patrimony in the study of English Antiquities, from a reverential love to his country, poor Stowe was ridiculed, calumniated, neglected, and persecuted. One cannot read without indignation and pity what Howes, his continuator, tells us in his dedication. Howes had observed that—

"No man would lend a helping hand to the ate aged painful Chronicler, nor, after his death, prosecute his work. He applied himself to several persons of dignity and learning, whose names had got forth among the public as likely to be the continuators of Stowe; but every one persisted in denying this, and some imagined that their secret enemies had mentioned their names with a view of injuring them, by incurring the displeasure of their superiors, and risking their own quiet. One said, 'I will *not flatter*, to scandalise my posterity;' another, 'I cannot see how a man should spend his labour and money worse than in that which acquires no regard nor reward except *backbiting* and *detraction*:' One swore a great oath, and said, 'I thank God that I am not yet so mad to waste my time, spend two hundred pounds a year, trouble myself and all my friends, only to give assurance of endless reproach, loss of liberty, and bring all my days in question.'"

Unhappy authors! are such then the terrors which silence eloquence, and such the dangers which environ truth? Posterity has many discoveries to make, or many deceptions to endure! But we are treading on hot embers.

Such too was the fate of REGINALD SCOT, who, in an elaborate and curious volume [1], if he could not stop the torrent of the popular superstitions of witchcraft, was the first, at least, to break and scatter the waves. It is a work which forms an epoch in the history of the human mind in our country; but the author had anticipated a very remote period of its enlargement. Scot, the apostle of humanity, and the legislator of reason, lived in retirement, yet persecuted by religious credulity and legal cruelty.

SELDEN, perhaps the most learned of our antiquaries, was often led, in his curious investigations, to disturb his own peace, by giving the result of his enquiries. James I. and the Court party were willing enough to extol his profound authorities and reasonings, on topics which did not interfere with their system of arbitrary power; but they harassed and persecuted the author whom they would at other times eagerly quote as their advocate. Selden, in his "History of Tithes," had alarmed the clergy by the intricacy of his enquiries. He pretends, however, to have only collected the opposite opinions of others, without

[1] "The Discoverie of Witchcraft, necessary to be known for the undeceiving of Judges, Justices, and Juries, and for the Preservation of Poor People. Third edition, 1665." This was about the time that, according to Arnot's Scots Trials, the expenses of burning a witch amounted to ninety-two pounds fourteen shillings, Scots. The unfortunate old woman cost two trees, and employed two men to watch her closely for thirty days! One ought to recollect the past follies of humanity, to detect, perhaps, some existing ones.

delivering his own. The book was not only suppressed, but the great author was further disgraced by subscribing a gross recantation of all his learned investigations—and was compelled to receive in silence the insults of courtly scholars, who had the hardihood to accuse him of plagiarism, and other literary treasons, which more sensibly hurt Selden than the recantation extorted from his hand by "the Lords of the High Commission Court." James I. would not suffer him to reply to them—When the King desired Selden to show the right of the British Crown to the dominion of the sea, this learned author having made proper collections, Selden, angried at an imprisonment he had undergone, refused to publish the work. A great author like Selden degrades himself when any personal feeling, in literary disputes, places him on an equality with any King; the duty was to his country.—But Selden, alive to the call of rival genius, when Grotius published, in Holland, his *Mare liberum,* gave the world his *Mare clausum;* when Selden had to encounter Grotius, and to proclaim to the universe "the Sovereignty of the Seas," how contemptible to him appeared the mean persecutions of a crowned head, and how little his own meaner resentment!

To this subject the fate of Dr. HAWKESWORTH is somewhat allied. It is well known that this author, having distinguished himself by his pleasing compositions in the "Adventurer," was chosen to draw up the narrative of Cook's discoveries in the South Seas. The pictures of a new world, the description of new manners in an original state of society, and the incidents arising from an adventure which could find no parallel in the annals of mankind, but under the solitary genius of Columbus—all these were conceived to offer a history, to which the moral and contemplative powers of Hawkesworth only were equal. Our author's fate, and that of his work, are known: he incurred all the danger of giving the result of his inquiries; he indulged his imagination till it burst into pruriency, and discussed moral theorems till he ceased to be moral. The shock it gave to the feelings of our author was fatal; and the error of a mind, intent on inquiries, which, perhaps, he thought innocent, and which the world condemned as criminal, terminated in death itself. Hawkesworth was a vain man, and proud of having raised himself by his literary talents from his native obscurity: of no learning, he drew all his science from the Cyclopædia; and, I have heard, could not always have construed the Latin mottos of his own paper, which were furnished by Johnson; but his sensibility was abundant—and ere his work was given to the world he felt those tremblings, and those doubts, which anticipated his fate. That he was in a state of mental agony respecting the

reception of his opinions, and some other parts of his work, will, I think, be discovered in the following letter, hitherto unpublished. It was addressed, with his MSS., to a Peer, to be examined before they were sent to the press—an occupation probably rather too serious for the noble critic:—

"London, March 2, 1761.

"I think myself happy to be permitted to put *my MSS. into your Lordship's hands*, because, though it increases my anxieties and my fears, yet it will at least secure me from what I should think *a far greater misfortune* than any other that can attend my performance, *the danger of addressing to the King any sentiment, allusion, or opinion,* that could make such an address *improper.*—I have now the honour to submit the *work* to your Lordship, with the dedication; from which the duty I owe to his Majesty, and, if I may be permitted to add anything to that, the duty I owe to myself, have concurred to exclude the servile, extravagant, and indiscriminate adulation, which has so often disgraced alike those by whom it has been given and received. I remain," etc., etc.

This elegant epistle justly describes that delicacy in style, which has been so rarely practised by an indiscriminate dedicator; and it not less feelingly touches on that "far greater misfortune than any other," which finally overwhelmed the fortitude and intellect of this unhappy author!

A NATIONAL WORK WHICH COULD FIND NO PATRONAGE.

THE author who is now before us is DE LOLME!

I shall consider as an English author, that foreigner, who flew to our country as the asylum of Europe, who composed a noble work on our Constitution, and, having imbibed its spirit, acquired even the language of a free country.

I do not know an example in our literary history that so loudly accuses our tardy and phlegmatic feeling respecting authors, as the treatment De Lolme experienced in this country. His book on our Constitution still enters into the studies of an English patriot, and is not the worse for flattering and elevating the imagination, painting everything beautiful, to encourage our love as well as our reverence for the most perfect system of governments. It was a noble as well as ingenious effort in a foreigner—it claimed national attention—but could not obtain

even individual patronage. The fact is mortifying to record, that the author who wanted every aid, received less encouragement than if he had solicited subscriptions for a raving novel, or an idle poem. De Lolme was compelled to traffick with booksellers for this work; and, as he was a theoretical rather than a practical politician, he was a bad trader, and acquired the smallest remuneration. He lived, in the country to which he had rendered a national service, in extreme obscurity and decay; and the walls of the Fleet too often enclosed the English Montesquieu. He never appears to have received a solitary attention [1], and became so disgusted with authorship, that he preferred silently to endure its poverty rather than its other vexations. He ceased almost to write. Of De Lolme I have heard little recorded but his high-mindedness; a strong sense that he stood degraded beneath that rank in society which his book entitled him to enjoy. The cloud of poverty that covered him only veiled without concealing its object; with the manners and dress of a decayed gentlemen, he still showed the few who met him that he cherished a spirit perpetually at variance with the adversity of his circumstances.

Our author, in a narrative prefixed to his work, is the proud historian of his own injured feelings; he smiled in bitterness on his contemporaries, confident it was a tale reserved for posterity.

After having written the work whose systematic principles refuted those political notions which prevailed at the era of the American revolution,—and whose truth has been so fatally demonstrated in our own times, in two great revolutions, which have shown all the defects and all the mischief of nations rushing into a state of freedom before they are worthy of it,—the author candidly acknowledges he counted on some sort of encouragement, and little expected to find the mere publication had drawn him into great inconvenience.

"When my enlarged English edition was ready for the press, had I acquainted ministers that I was preparing to boil my tea-kettle with it, for want of being able to afford the expenses of printing it," ministers, it seems, would not have considered that he was lighting his fire with "myrrh, and cassia, and precious ointment."

In the want of encouragement from great men, and even from booksellers, De Lolme had recourse to a subscription, and his account of the manner he was received, and the indignities he endured, all which are narrated with great simplicity, show that whatever his knowledge of our Constitution might be, "his

[1] Except from the hand of literary charity; he was more than once relieved by the Literary Fund. Such are the authors only whom it is wise to patronise.

knowledge of the country was, at that time, very incomplete." At length, when he shared the profits of his work with the booksellers, they were "but scanty and slow." After all, our author sarcastically congratulates himself, that he—

"Was allowed to carry on the above business of selling my book, without any objection being formed against me, from my not having served a regular apprenticeship, and without being molested by the inquisition."

And further he adds,—

"Several authors have chosen to relate, in writings published after death, the personal advantages by which their performances had been followed; as for me, I have thought otherwise—and I will see it printed while I am yet living."

This, indeed, is the language of irritation! and De Lolme degrades himself in the loudness of his complaint. But if the philosopher lost his temper, that misfortune will not take away the dishonour of the occasion that produced it. The country's shame is not lessened because the author who had raised its glory throughout Europe, and instructed the nation in its best lesson, grew indignant at the ingratitude of his pupil. De Lolme ought not to have congratulated himself that he had been allowed the liberty of the press unharassed by an inquisition — this sarcasm is senseless! or his book is a mere fiction!

THE MISERIES OF SUCCESSFUL AUTHORS.

HUME is an author so celebrated, a philosopher so serene, and a man so extremely amiable, if not fortunate, that we may be surprised to meet his name inscribed in a catalogue of literary calamities. Look into his literary life, and you will discover that the greater portion was mortified and angried; and that the stoic so lost his temper, that had not circumstances intervened which did not depend on himself, Hume had abandoned his country and changed his name!

"The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity." His "Treatise of Human Nature" fell dead-born from the press. It was cast anew with another title, and was at first little more successful. The following letter to Des Maiseaux, which I believe is now first published, gives us the feelings of the youthful and modest philosopher:—

"DAVID HUME TO DES MAISEAUX.

"SIR,

"Whenever you see my name, you'll readily imagine the subject of my letter. A young author can scarce forbear speaking of his performance to all the world; but when he meets with one that is a good judge, and whose instruction and advice he depends on, there ought some indulgence to be given him. You were so good as to promise me, that if you could find leisure from your other occupations, you would look over my system of philosophy, and at the same time ask the opinion of such of your acquaintance as you thought proper judges. Have you found it sufficiently intelligible? Does it appear true to you? Do the style and language seem tolerable? These three questions comprehend every thing; and I beg of you to answer them with the utmost freedom and sincerity. I know 'tis a custom to flatter Poets on their performances, but I hope Philosophers may be exempted; and the more so that their cases are by no means alike; when we do not approve of anything in a Poet we commonly can give no reason for our dislikes but our particular taste; which not being convincing, we think it better to conceal our sentiments altogether. But every error in Philosophy can be distinctly markt and proved to be such; and this is a favour I flatter myself you'll indulge me in with regard to the performance I put into your hands. I am, indeed, afraid, that it would be too great a trouble for you to mark all the Errors you have observed: I shall only insist upon being informed of the most material of them, and you may assure yourself I will consider it as a singular favour.—I am, with great esteem,

"Sir, your most obedient and most
humble servant,
"DAVID HUME.

"Aprile 6, 1739.

"Please direct to me at Ninewells, near Berwick upon Tweed."

Hume's own favourite "Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals" came unnoticed and unobserved in the world. When he published the first portion of his "History," which made even Hume himself sanguine in his expectations,—he tells his own tale:—

"I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of

popular prejudices; and, as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment! All classes of man and readers united in their rage against him who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford." "What was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion, and in a twelvemonth not more than forty-five copies were sold."

Even Hume, a stoic hitherto in his literary character, was struck down, and dismayed—he lost all courage to proceed—and, had the war not prevented him, "he had resolved to change his name, and never more to have returned to his native country."

But an author, though born to suffer martyrdom, does not always expire; he may be flayed like St. Bartholomew, and yet he can breathe without a skin; stoned, like St. Stephen, and yet write on with a broken head, and he has been even known to survive the flames, notwithstanding the most precious part of an author, which is obviously his book, has been burnt in an *auto da fe*. Hume once more tried the press in "The Natural History of Religion." It proved but another martyrdom! Still was the *fall* (as he terms it) of the first volume of his History haunting his nervous imagination, when he found himself yet strong enough to hold a pen in his hand, and ventured to produce a second, which "helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother." But the third part, containing the reign of Elizabeth, was particularly obnoxious, and he was doubtful whether he was again to be led to the stake. But Hume, a little hardened by a little success, grew, to use his own words, "callous against the impressions of public folly," and completed his History, which was now received "with tolerable, and but tolerable, success."

At length, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, our author began, a year or two before he died, as he writes, to see "many *symptoms* of my literary reputation, breaking out *at last* with additional lustre, though I know that I can have but few years to enjoy it." What a provoking consolation for a philosopher, who, according to the result of his own system, was close upon a state of annihilation!

To Hume, let us add the illustrious name of DRYDEN.

It was after preparing a second edition of Virgil, that the great Dryden, who had lived, and was to die in harness, found himself still obliged to seek for daily bread. Scarcely relieved from one heavy task he was compelled to hasten to another; and his efforts were now stimulated by a domestic feeling, the expected return of his son in ill-health from Rome. In a letter

to his bookseller he pathetically writes, "if it please God that *I must die of overstudy*, I cannot spend my life better than in preserving his." It was on this occasion, on the verge of his seventieth year, as he describes himself in the dedication of his Virgil, that, "worn out with study, and oppressed with fortune," he contracted to supply the bookseller with 10,000 verses at sixpence a line!

What was his entire dramatic life, but a series of vexation and hostility, from his first play to his last? On those very boards whence Dryden was to have derived the means of his existence and his fame, he saw his foibles aggravated, and his morals aspersed. Overwhelmed, by the keen ridicule of Buckingham, and maliciously mortified by the triumph which Settle, his meanest rival, was allowed to obtain over him—and doomed still to encounter the cool malignant eye of Langbaine, who read poetry only to detect plagiarism. Contemporary genius is inspected with too much familiarity to be felt with reverence; and the angry prefaces of Dryden only excited the little revenge of the wits. How could such sympathise with injured, but with lofty feelings? They spread two reports of him, which may not be true, but which hurt him with the public. It was said that, being jealous of the success of Creech, for his version of Lucretius, he advised him to attempt Horace, in which Dryden knew he would fail—and a contemporary haunter of the theatre, in a curious letter[1] on "The Winter Diversions," says of Congreve's angry preface to the Double Dealer," that—

"The critics were severe upon this play, which gave the author occasion to lash them in his epistle dedicatory—so that 'tis generally thought *he has done his business, and lost himself;* a thing he owes to Mr. Dryden's *treacherous friendship,* who, being *jealous of the applause* he had got by his 'Old Bachelor,' *deluded him* into a foolish imitation of his own way of writing angry prefaces."

This lively critic is still more vivacious on the great Dryden, who had then produced his "Love Triumphant," which, the critic says,

"Was damned by the universal cry of the town, *nemine contradicente* but the *conceited poet.* He says in his prologue, that 'this is the last the town must expect from him:' he had done himself a kindness had he taken his leave before." He then describes the success of Southerne's "Fatal Marriage, or the Innocent Adultery;" and concludes, "This kind usage will

[1] A letter found among the papers of the late Mr. Windham, which Mr. Malone has preserved.

encourage desponding minor poets, and *vex huffing Dryden and Congreve to madness.*"

I have quoted thus much of this letter, that we may have before us a true image of those feelings which contemporaries entertain of the greater geniuses of their age; how they seek to level them; and in what manner men of genius are doomed to be treated—slighted, starved, and abused. Dryden and Congreve! the one the finest genius, the other the most exquisite wit of our nation, are to be *vexed to madness!*—their failures are not to excite sympathy, but contempt or ridicule? How the feelings and the language of contemporaries differ from that of posterity! And yet let *us* not exult in our purer and more dignified feelings—*we* are, indeed, the *posterity* of Dryden and Congreve; but we are the *contemporaries* of others who must patiently hope for better treatment from our sons than they have received from the fathers.

Dryden was no master of the pathetic, yet never were compositions more pathetic than the Prefaces this great man has transmitted to posterity! Opening all the feelings of his heart, we live among his domestic sorrows. Johnson censures Dryden for saying *he has few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among Englishmen*[1]. We have just seen that Hume went farther, and sighed to fly to a retreat beyond that country which knew not to reward genius.—What, if Dryden felt the dignity of that character he supported, dare we blame his frankness? If the age be ungenerous, shall contemporaries escape the scourge of the great author, who feels he is addressing another age more favourable to him?

Johnson, too, notices his "Self-condemnation; his diligence in reminding the world of his merits, and expressing, with very little scruple, his high opinion of his own powers." Dryden shall answer in his own words; with all the simplicity of Montaigne, he expresses himself with the dignity that would have become Milton or Gray:—

"It is a vanity common to all writers to over-value their own productions; and it is better for me to own this failing in myself, than the world to do it for me. *For what other reason have I spent my life in such an unprofitable study? Why am I grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame?* The same parts and application which have made me a poet, might have raised me to any honours of the gown,

[1] There is an affecting *remonstrance* of Dryden to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, on the state of his poverty and neglect—in which is this remarkable passage:—"It is enough for one age to have *neglected* Mr. Cowley, and *starved* Mr. Butler."

which are often given to men of as little learning, and less honesty, than myself."

How feelingly Whitehead paints the situation of Dryden in his old age :—

> "Yet lives the man, how wild soe'er his aim,
> Would madly barter fortune's smiles for fame?
> Well pleas'd to shine, through each recording page,
> The hapless Dryden of a shameless age!
> "Ill-fated bard! where'er thy name appears,
> The weeping verse a sad memento bears;
> Ah! what avail'd the enormous blaze between
> Thy dawn of glory and thy closing scene!
> When sinking nature asks our kind repairs,
> Unstrung the nerves, and silver'd o'er the hairs;
> When stay'd reflection came uncall'd at last,
> And gray experience counts each folly past!"

MICKLE's version of the Lusiad offers an affecting instance of the melancholy fears which often accompany the progress of works of magnitude, undertaken by men of genius. Five years he had buried himself in a farm-house, devoted to the solitary labour; and he closes his preface with the fragment of a poem, whose stanzas have perpetuated all the tremblings and the emotions, whose unhappy influence the author had experienced through the long work. Thus pathetically he addresses the Muse :—

> "—Well thy meed repays thy worthless toil;
> Upon thy houseless head pale want descends
> In bitter shower; and taunting Scorn still rends
> And wakes thee trembling from thy golden dream:
> In vetchy bed, or loathly dungeon ends
> Thy idled life——"

And when, at length, the great and anxious labour was completed, the author was still more unhappy than under the former influence of his foreboding terrors. The work is dedicated to the Duke of Buccleugh. Whether his Grace had been prejudiced against the poetical labour by Adam Smith, who had as little comprehension of the nature of poetry as becomes a political economist, or from whatever cause, after possessing it for six weeks the Duke had never condescended to open the volume. It is to the honour of Mickle that the Dedication is a simple respectful inscription, in which the poet had not compromised his dignity,—and that in the second edition he had the magnanimity not to withdraw the dedication to this statue-like patron. Neither was the critical reception of this splendid labour of five devoted years grateful to the sensibility of the author : he writes to a friend—

"Though my work is well received at Oxford, I will honestly

own to you, some things have hurt me. A few grammatical slips in the introduction have been mentioned; and some things in the notes about Virgil, Milton, and Homer, have been called the arrogance of criticism. But the greatest offence of all is, what I say of blank verse."

He was, indeed, after this great work was given to the public, as unhappy as at any preceding period of his life; and Mickle too, like Hume and Dryden, could feel a wish to forsake his native land! He still found his "head houseless;" and "the vetchy bed" and "loathly dungeon" still haunted his dreams. "To write for the booksellers is what I never will do," exclaimed this man of genius, though struck by poverty. He projected an edition of his own poems by subscription.

"Desirous of giving an edition of my works, in which I shall bestow the utmost attention, which, perhaps, will be my final farewell to that blighted spot (worse than the most bleak mountains of Scotland) yclept Parnassus; after this labour is finished, if Governor Johnstone cannot or does not help me to a little independence, *I will certainly bid adieu to Europe, to unhappy suspense, and perhaps also to the chagrin of soul which I feel to accompany it.*

Such was the language which cannot now be read without exciting our sympathy for the author of the version of an epic, which, after a solemn devotion of no small portion of the most valuable years of life, had been presented to the world, with not sufficient remuneration or notice of the author, to create even hope in the sanguine temperament of a poet. Mickle was more honoured at Lisbon than in his own country. So imperceptible are the gradations of public favour to the feelings of genius, and so vast an interval separates that author, who does not immediately address the tastes or the fashions of his age, from the reward or the enjoyment of his studies.

We cannot account, among the lesser calamities of literature, that of a man of genius, who, dedicating his days to the composition of a voluminous and national work, when that labour is accomplished, finds, on its publication, the hope of fame, and perhaps other hopes as necessary to reward past toil, and open to future enterprise, all annihilated. Yet this work neglected, or not relished, perhaps even the sport of witlings, afterwards is placed among the treasures of our language, when the author is no more! but what is posthumous gratitude, could it reach even the ear of an angel?

The calamity is unavoidable; but this circumstance does not lessen it. New works must for a time be submitted to popular favour; but posterity is the inheritance of genius. The man of genius, however, who has composed this great work, calculates

his vigils, is best acquainted with its merits, and is not without an anticipation of the future feeling of his country; he

> "But weeps the more, because he weeps in vain."

Such is the fate which has awaited many great works; and the heart of genius has died away on its own labours. I need not go so far back as the Elizabethan age to illustrate a calamity which will excite the sympathy of every man of letters; but the great work of a man of no ordinary genius presents itself on this occasion.

This great work is "The Polyolbion" of MICHAEL DRAYTON; a poem unrivalled for its magnitude and its character. The genealogy of poetry is always suspicious; yet I think it owed its birth to Leland's magnificent view of his intended work on Britain, and was probably nourished by the "Britannia" of Camden, who inherited the mighty industry, without the poetical spirit, of Leland; Drayton embraced both. This singular combination of topographical erudition and poetical fancy, constitutes a national work—a union that some may conceive not fortunate, no more than "the slow length" of its Alexandrine metre, for the purposes of mere delight. Yet what theme can be more elevating than a bard chanting to his "Fatherland," as the Hollanders called their country? Our tales of ancient glory, our worthies who must not die, our towns, our rivers, and our mountains, all glancing before the picturesque eye of the naturalist and the poet! It is, indeed, a labour of Hercules; but it was not unaccompanied by the lyre of Apollo.

This national work was ill received; and the great author dejected, never pardoned his contemporaries, and even lost his temper. Drayton and his poetical friends beheld indignantly the trifles of the hour overpowering the neglected Polyolbion.

One poet tells us that

> "———————— they prefer
> The fawning lines of every pamphleter."
>
> GEO. WITHERS.

And a contemporary records the utter neglect of this great poet:

> "Why lives Drayton when the times refuse
> Both means to live, and matter for a muse,
> Only without excuse to leave us quite,
> And tell us, durst we act, he durst to write."
>
> W. BROWNE.

Drayton published his Polyolbion first in eighteen parts; and the second portion afterwards. In this interval we have a letter to Drummond, dated in 1619:—

"I thank you, my dear sweet Drummond, for your good opinion of Polyolbion. I have done twelve books more, that is, from the 18th book, which was Kent (if you note it), all the east parts and north to the river of Tweed; *but it lieth by me, for the booksellers and I are in terms:* they are a company of base knaves, whom I scorn and kick at."

The vengeance of the poet had been more justly wreaked on the buyers of books, than on the sellers, who, though knavery has a strong connection with trade, yet, were they knaves, they would be true to their own interests. Far from impeding a successful author, booksellers are apt to hurry his labours; for they prefer the crude to the mature fruit, whenever the public taste can be appeased even by an unripened dessert.

These "knaves," however, seem to have succeeded in forcing poor Drayton to observe an abstinence from the press, which must have convulsed all the feelings of authorship. The second part was not published till three years after this letter was written; and then without maps. Its preface is remarkable enough; it is pathetic, till Drayton loses the dignity of genius in its asperity. It is inscribed, in no good humour—

"To any that will read it!

"When I first undertook this poem, or, as some have pleased to term it, this Herculean labour, I was by some virtuous friends persuaded that I should receive much comfort and encouragement; and for these reasons: First, it was a new clear way, never before gone by any; that it contained all the delicacies, delights, and rarities of this renowned isle, interwoven with the histories of the Britains, Saxons, Normans, and the later English. And further, that there is scarcely any of the nobility or gentry of this land, but that he is some way or other interested therein.

"But it hath fallen out otherwise; for instead of that comfort which my noble friends proposed as my due, I have met with barbarous ignorance and base detraction; such a cloud hath the devil drawn over the world's judgment. Some of the stationers that had the selling of the first part of this poem, because *it went not so fast away in the selling* as some of their beastly and abominable trash (a shame both to our language and our nation), have despightfully left out the epistles to the readers, and so have cousened the buyers with imperfected books, which those that have undertaken the second part have been forced to amend in the first, for *the small number that are yet remaining in their hands.*

"And some of our outlandish, unnatural English (I know not how otherwise to express them) stick not to say that there is

nothing in this island worthy studying for, and take a great pride to be ignorant in anything thereof. As for these cattle, *odi profanum vulgus, et arceo*; of which I account them, be they never so great."

Yet, as a true poet, whose impulse, like fate, overturns all opposition, Drayton is not to be thrown out of his avocation; but intrepidly closes by promising "they shall not deter me from going on with Scotland, if means and time do not hinder me to perform as much as I have promised in my first song." Who could have imagined that such bitterness of style, and such angry emotions, could have been raised in the breast of a poet of pastoral elegance and fancy?

> "Whose bounding muse o'er ev'ry mountain rode,
> And every river warbled as it flow'd."
>
> KIRKPATRICK.

It is melancholy to reflect, that some of the greatest works in our language have involved their authors in distress and anxiety; and that many have gone down to their grave insensible of that glory which soon covered it.

THE ILLUSIONS OF WRITERS IN VERSE.

WHO would, with the awful severity of Plato, banish poets from the republic? But it may be desirable that the republic should not be banished from poets, which it seems to be when an inordinate passion for writing verses drives them from every active pursuit. There is no greater enemy to domestic quiet than a confirmed versifier; yet are most of them much to be pitied: it is the *mediocre* critics they first meet with, who are the real origin of a populace of *mediocre* poets. A young writer of verses is sure to get flattered by those who affect to admire what they do not even understand, and by those who, because they understand, imagine they are likewise endowed with delicacy of taste and a critical judgment. What sacrifices of social enjoyments, and all the business of life, are lavished with a prodigal's ruin in an employment which will be usually discovered to be a source of early anxiety, and of late disappointment[1]! I say nothing of the ridicule in which it involves some

[1] An elegant poet of our times alludes, with due feeling, to these personal sacrifices. Addressing Poetry, he exclaims—

> "In devotion to thy heavenly charms,
> I clasp'd thy altar with my infant arms;
> For thee neglected the wide field of wealth,
> The toils of interest, and the sports of health."

How often may we lament that poets are too apt "to clasp the altar with

wretched Mævius, but of the misery that falls so heavily on him, and is often entailed on his generation. Whitehead has versified an admirable reflection of Pope's, in the preface to his works: —

> "For wanting wit be totally undone,
> And barr'd all arts, for having fail'd in one?"

The great mind of BLACKSTONE never showed him more a poet than when he took, not without affection, "a farewell of the Muse," on his being called to the bar. DRUMMOND, of Hawthornden, quitted the bar from his love of poetry; yet he seems to have lamented slighting the profession which his father wished him to pursue. He perceives his error, he feels even contrition, but still cherishes it: no man, not in his senses, ever had a more lucid interval: —

> "I changed countries, new delights to find;
> But ah! for pleasure I did find new pain;
> Enchanting pleasure so did reason blind,
> That father's love and words I scorn'd as vain.
> I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
> With toil of spirit which are so dearly bought,
> As idle sounds of few or none are sought,
> That there is nothing lighter than vain praise;
> Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
> But that, alas! I both must write and love!"

Thus, like all poets, who, as Goldsmith observes, "are fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future," he talks like a man of sense, and acts like a fool.

This wonderful susceptibility of praise, to which poets seem more liable than any other class of authors, is indeed their common food; and they could not keep life in them without this nourishment. NAT. LEE, a true poet in all the excesses of poetical feelings—for he was in such raptures at times as to lose his senses—expresses himself in very energetic language on the effects of the praise necessary for poets: —

"Praise," says Lee, "is the greatest encouragement we chameleons can pretend to, or rather the manna that keeps soul and body together; we devour it as if it were angels' food, and vainly think we grow immortal. There is nothing transports a poet, next to love, like commending in the right place."

This, no doubt, is a rare enjoyment, and serves to strengthen his illusions. But the same fervid genius elsewhere confesses,

infant arms." Goldsmith was near forty when he published his popular poems —and the greater number of the most valued poems were produced in mature life. When the poet begins in "infancy," he too often contracts a habit of writing verses, and sometimes, in all his life, never reaches poetry.

when reproached for his ungoverned fancy, that it brings with itself its own punishment:—

"I cannot be," says this great and unfortunate poet, "so ridiculous a creature to any man as I am to myself; for who should know the house so well as the good man at home? who, when his neighbour comes to see him, still sets the best rooms to view; and, if he be not a wilful ass, keeps the rubbish and lumber in some dark hole, where nobody comes but himself, to mortify at melancholy hours."

Study the admirable preface of POPE, composed at that matured period of life when the fever of fame had passed away, and experience had corrected fancy. It is a calm statement between authors and readers; there is no imagination that colours by a single metaphor, or conceals the real feeling which moved the author on that solemn occasion, of collecting his works for the last time. It is on a full review of the past that this great poet delivers this remarkable sentence:—

"*I believe, if any one, early in his life, should contemplate the dangerous fate of* AUTHORS, *he would scarce be of their number on any consideration.* The life of a wit is a warfare upon earth; and to pretend to serve the learned world in any way, one must have the constancy of a martyr, and a resolution to suffer for its sake."

All this is so true in literary history, that he who affects to suspect the sincerity of Pope's declaration, may flatter his sagacity, but will do no credit to his knowledge.

If thus great poets pour their lamentations for having devoted themselves to their art, some sympathy is due to the querulousness of a numerous race of *provincial bards,* whose situation is ever at variance with their feelings. These usually form exaggerated conceptions of their own genius, from the habit of comparing themselves with their contracted circle. Restless, with a desire of poetical celebrity, their heated imagination views in the metropolis that fame and fortune denied them in their native town; there they become half-hermits and half-philosophers, darting epigrams which provoke hatred, or pouring elegies, descriptive of their feelings, which move derision: their neighbours find it much easier to ascertain their foibles, than comprehend their genius; and both parties live in a state of mutual persecution. Such, among many, was the fate of the poet HERRICK; his vein was pastoral, and he lived in the elysium of the west, which, however, he describes by the sullen epithet, "Dull Devonshire," where "he is still sad." Strange that such a poet should have resided near twenty years in one of our most beautiful counties in a very discontented humour. When he quitted his village of "Deanbourne," the petulant poet left behind him

a severe "farewell," which was found still preserved in the parish, after a lapse of more than a century. Local satire has been often preserved by the very objects it is directed against, sometimes from the charm of the wit itself, and sometimes from the covert malice of attacking our neighbours. Thus he addresses "Deanbourne, a rude river in Devonshire, by which, sometime, he lived:—"

> "Dean-bourn, farewell!
> Thy rockie bottom that doth tear thy streams,
> And makes them frantic, e'en to all extremes.
> Rockie thou art, and rockie we discover
> Thy men,—
> O men! O manners!
> O people currish as their seas—"

He rejoices he leaves them, never to return till "rocks shall turn to rivers." When he arrives in London,

> "From the dull confines of the drooping west,
> To see the day-spring from the pregnant east,"

he, "ravished in spirit," exclaims, on a view of the metropolis,

> "O place! O people! manners form'd to please
> All nations, customs, kindreds, languages!"

But he fervently entreats not to be banished again:

> "For, rather than I'll to the west return,
> I'll beg of thee first, here to have mine urn."

The Devonians were avenged; for the satirist of the *English Arcadia* was condemned again to reside by "its rockie side," among "its rockie men."

Such has been the usual chaunt of provincial poets; and, if the "silky-soft Favonian gales" of Devon, with its "Worthies," could not escape the anger of such a poet as Herrick, what county may hope to be saved from the invective of querulous and dissatisfied poets?

In this calamity of authors I will show that a great poet felicitated himself that poetry was not the business of his life; and afterwards I will bring forward an evidence that the immoderate pursuit of poetry, with a very moderate genius, creates a perpetual state of illusion; and pursues gray-headed folly even to the verge of the grave.

Pope imagined that PRIOR was only fit to make verses, and less qualified for business than Addison himself. Had Prior lived to finish that history of his own times he was writing, we should have seen how far the opinion of Pope was right. Prior abandoned the Whigs, who had been his first patrons, for the Tories,

who were now willing to adopt the political apostate. This versatility for place and pension rather shows that Prior was a little more "qualified for business than Addison."

Johnson tells us "Prior lived at a time when the rage of party detected all which was any man's interest to hide; and, as little ill is heard of Prior, it is certain that not much was known:" more, however, than Johnson supposes. This great man came to the pleasing task of his poetical biography totally unprepared, except with the maturity of his genius, as a profound observer of man, and an invincible dogmatist in taste. In the history of the times, Johnson is deficient, which has deprived us of that permanent instruction and delight his intellectual powers had poured around it. The character and the secret history of Prior are laid open in the "State Poems[1];" a bitter Whiggish narrative, too particular to be entirely fictitious, while it throws a new light on Johnson's observation of Prior's "propensity to sordid converse, and the low delights of mean company," which Johnson had imperfectly learned from some attendant on Prior.

"A vintner's boy, the wretch was first preferr'd
To wait at Vice's gates, and pimp for bread;
To hold the candle, and sometimes the door,
Let in the drunkard, and let out——.
But, as to villains it has often chanc'd,
Was for his wit and wickedness advanc'd.
Let no man think his new behaviour strange,
No metamorphosis can nature change;
Effects are chain'd to causes; generally,
The rascal born will like a rascal die.
"His Prince's favours follow'd him in vain;
They chang'd the circumstance, but not the man,
While out of pocket, and his spirits low,
He'd beg, write panegyrics, cringe, and bow;
But when good pensions had his labours crown'd,
His panegyrics into satires turn'd;
O what assiduous pains does Prior take
To let great Dorset see he could mistake!
Dissembling nature false description gave,
Show'd him the poet, but conceal'd the knave."

To us the poet Prior is better known than the placeman Prior; yet in his own day the reverse often occurred. Prior was a State-Problem; Sunderland, the most ambiguous of politicians, was the Earl *Robert* to whom he addressed his *Mice;* and Prior was now Secretary to the Embassy at Ryswick and Paris; independent even of the English ambassador — now a Lord of Trade, and, at length, a Minister Plenipotentiary to Louis XIV. Our business is with his poetical feelings.

[1] Vol. II. p. 355.

Prior declares he was chiefly "a poet by accident;" and hints, in collecting his works, that "some of them, as they came singly from the first impression, have lain long and quietly in Mr. Tonson's shop." When his party had their downfall, and he was confined two years in prison, he composed his "Alma," to while away prison hours; and when, at length, he obtained his freedom, he had nothing remaining but that fellowship which, in his exaltation, he had been censured for retaining, but which he then said he might have to live upon at last. Prior had great sagacity, and too right a notion of human affairs in politics, to expect his party would last his time, or in poetry, that he could ever derive a revenue from rhymes!

I will now show that that rare personage, a sensible poet, in reviewing his life in that hour of solitude when no passion is retained but truth, while we are casting up the amount of our past days scrupulously to ourselves, felicitated himself that the natural bent of his mind, which inclined to poetry, had been checked, and not indulged, throughout his whole life. Prior congratulated himself that he had been only "a poet by accident," not by occupation.

In a manuscript by Prior, consisting of "An Essay on Learning," I find this curious and interesting passage entirely relating to the poet himself:

"I remember nothing farther in life than that I made verses; I chose Guy Earl of Warwick for my first hero, and killed Colborne the giant before I was big enough for Westminster School. But I had two accidents in youth which hindered me from being quite possessed with the Muse. I was bred in a college where prose was more in fashion than verse,—and, as soon as I had taken my first degree, I was sent the King's Secretary to the Hague; there I had enough to do in studying French and Dutch, and altering my Terentian and Virgilian style into that of Articles and Conventions; so that *poetry, which by the bent of my mind might have become the business of my life, was, by the happiness of my education, only the amusement of it;* and in this too having the prospect of some little fortune to be made, and friendships to be cultivated with the great men, I did not launch much into *Satire*, which, however agreeable for the present to the writers and encouragers of it, does in time do neither of them good; considering the uncertainty of fortune, and the various changes of Ministry, and that every man, as he resents, may punish in his turn of greatness and power."

Such is the wholesome counsel of the Solomon of Bards to an aspirant, who in his ardour for poetical honours, becomes careless of their consequences, if he can but possess them.

I have now to bring forward one of those unhappy men of

rhyme, who, after many painful struggles, and a long querulous life, have died amid the ravings of their immortality—one of those miserable bards of mediocrity, whom no beadle-critic could ever whip out of the poetical parish.

There is a case in Mr. Haslam's "Observations on Insanity," who assures us that the patient he describes was insane, which will appear strange to those who have watched more poets than lunatics!

"This patient, when admitted, was very noisy, and importunately talkative—reciting passages from the Greek and Roman poets, or talking of his own literary importance. He became so troublesome to the other madmen, who were sufficiently occupied with their own speculations, that they avoided and excluded him from the common room; so that he was at last reduced to the mortifying situation of being the sole auditor of his own compositions. He conceived himself very nearly related to Anacreon, and possessed of the peculiar vein of that poet."

Such is the very accurate case drawn up by a medical writer. I can conceive nothing in it to warrant the charge of insanity; Mr. Haslam, not being a poet, seems to have mistaken the common orgasm of poetry for insanity itself.

Of such poets, one was the late PERCIVAL STOCKDALE, who, with the most entertaining simplicity, has, in "The Memoirs of his Life and Writings," presented us with a full-length figure of this class of poets; those whom the perpetual pursuits of poetry, however indifferent, involve in a perpetual illusion; they are only discovered in their profound obscurity by the piteous cries they sometimes utter; they live on querulously, which is an evil for themselves, and to no purpose of life, which is an evil to others.

I remember in my youth, Percival Stockdale, as a condemned poet of the times; of whom the bookseller Flexney complained, that whenever this poet came to town, it cost him twenty pounds. Flexney had been the publisher of Churchill's works; and, never forgetting the time when he published "The Rosciad," which at first did not sell, and afterwards became the most popular poem, he was speculating all his life for another Churchill, and another quarto poem. Stockdale usually brought him what he wanted—and Flexney found the workman, but never the work.

Many a year had passed in silence, and Stockdale could hardly be considered alive, when, to the amazement of some curious observers of our literature, a venerable man, about his eightieth year, a vivacious spectre, with a cheerful voice, seemed as if throwing aside his shroud in gaiety—to come to assure us of the immortality of one of the worst poets of the time.

To have taken this portrait from the life would have been

difficult; but the artist has painted himself, and manufactured his own colours; else had our ordinary ones but faintly copied this Chinese grotesque picture—the glare and the glow must be borrowed from his own pallet.

Our self-biographer announces his "Life" with prospective rapture, at the moment he is turning a sad retrospect on his "Writings;" for this was the chequered countenance of his character, a smile while he was writing, a tear when he had published! "I know," he exclaims, "that this book will live and escape *the havoc that has been made of my literary fame.*" Again—"Before I die, I *think my literary fame may be fixed on an adamantine foundation.*" Our old acquaintance, Blas of Santillane, at setting out on his travels, conceived himself to be *la huitième merveille du monde*; but here is one, who, after the experience of a long life, is writing a large work to prove himself that very curious thing.

What were these mighty and unknown works? Stockdale confesses that all his verses have been received with negligence or contempt; yet their mediocrity, the absolute poverty of his genius, never once occurred to the poetical patriarch.

I have said that the frequent origin of bad poets is owing to bad critics; and it was the early friends of Stockdale, who mistaking his animal spirits for genius, by directing them into the walks of poetry, bewildered him for ever. It was their hand that heedlessly fixed the bias in the rolling bowl of his restless mind.

He tells us that while yet a boy of twelve years old, one day talking with his father at Branxton, where the battle of Flodden was fought, the old gentleman said to him with great emphasis—

"You may make that place remarkable for your birth, if you take care of yourself. My father's understanding was clear and strong, and he could penetrate human nature. He already saw that *I had natural advantages above those of common men.*"

But it seems that, at some earlier period even than his twelfth year, some good-natured Pythian had predicted that Stockdale would be "a poet." This ambiguous oracle was still listened to, after a lapse of more than half a century, and the decree is still repeated with fond credulity:—"Notwithstanding," he exclaims, "*all that is past*, O thou god of my mind! [meaning the aforesaid Pythian] I still hope that my future fame will decidedly *warrant the prediction!*"

Stockdale had, in truth, an excessive sensibility of temper, without any control over it—he had all the nervous contortions of the Sybil, without her inspiration; and shifting, in his many-shaped life, through all characters and all pursuits, "exalting the olive of Minerva with the grape of Bacchus," as he phrases it, he was a lover, a tutor, a recruiting officer, a reviewer, and,

at length, a clergyman; but a poet eternally! His mind was so curved, that nothing could stand steadily upon it. The accidents of such a life he describes with such a face of rueful simplicity, and mixes up so much grave drollery and merry pathos with all he says or does, and his ubiquity is so wonderful, that he gives an idea of a character, of whose existence we had previously no conception, that of a Sentimental Harlequin [1].

In the early part of his life, Stockdale undertook many poetical pilgrimages; he visited the house where Thomson was born; the coffee-room where Dryden presided among the wits, etc. Recollecting the influence of these local associations, he breaks forth, "Neither the unrelenting coldness, nor the repeated insolence of mankind, can prevent me from thinking that *something like this enthusiastic devotion may hereafter be paid to* ME."

Perhaps, till this appeared, it might not be suspected that any unlucky writer of verse could ever feel such a magical conviction of his poetical stability. Stockdale, to assist this pilgrimage to his various shrines, has particularised all the spots where his works were composed! Posterity has many shrines to visit, and will be glad to know (for perhaps it may excite a smile) that "The Philosopher, a poem, was written in Warwick Court, Holborn, in 1769,"—"The Life of Waller, in Round Court in the Strand." —A good deal he wrote in "May's Buildings, St. Martin's Lane etc." but.

"In my lodgings at Portsmouth, in St. Mary's Street, I wrote my Elegy on the Death of a Lady's Linnet. It will not be uninteresting to sensibility, to thinking and elegant minds. It deeply interested me, and therefore produced not one of my weakest and worst written poems. It was directly opposite to a noted house, which was distinguished by the name of *the green rails*; where the riotous orgies of Naxos and Cythera contrasted with my quiet and purer occupations."

I would not, however, take his own estimate of his own poems; because, after praising them outrageously, he seems at times to doubt if they are as exquisite as he thinks them! He has composed no one, in which some poetical excellence does not appear—and yet in each nice decision he holds with difficulty the trepidations of the scales of criticism—for he tells us

[1] My old favourite Cynic, with all his rough honesty and acute discrimination, Anthony Wood, engraved a sketch of Stockdale when he etched with his aqua-fortis the personage of a brother:—"This Edward Waterhouse wrote a rhapsodical, indigested, whimsical work; and not in the least to be taken into the hand of any sober scholar, unless it be to make him laugh or wonder at the simplicity of some people. He was a cockbrained man, and afterwards took orders."

of "An Address to the Supreme Being," that "it is distinguished throughout with a natural and fervid piety; it is flowing and poetical; it is not without its pathos." And yet, notwithstanding all this condiment, the confection is evidently good for nothing; for he discovers that "this flowing, fervid, and poetical address" is "not animated with that vigour which gives dignity and impression to poetry." One feels for such unhappy and infected authors—they would think of themselves as they wish, at the moment that truth and experience come in upon them, and rack them with the most painful feelings.

Stockdale once wrote a declamatory life of Waller—When Johnson's appeared, though in his biography, says Stockdale, "he paid a large tribute to the abilities of Goldsmith and Hawkesworth, yet *he made no mention of my name.*" It is evident that Johnson, who knew him well, did not care to remember it. When Johnson was busied on the life of Pope, Stockdale wrote a pathetic letter to him, *earnestly imploring* "a generous tribute from his authority." Johnson was still obdurately silent; and Stockdale, who had received many acts of humane kindness from him, adds with fretful *naïveté*,

"In his sentiments towards me he was divided between a benevolence to my interests, and a *coldness to my fame.*"

Thus, in a moment, in the perverted heart of the scribbler, will ever be cancelled all human obligation for acts of benevolence, if we are *cold to his fame!*

And yet let us not too hastily condemn these unhappy men, even for the violation of the lesser moral feelings—it is often but a fatal effect from a melancholy cause; that hallucination of the intellect, in which, if their genius, as they call it, sometimes appears to sparkle like a painted bubble in the buoyancy of their vanity, they are also condemned to see it sinking in the dark horrors of a disappointed author, who has risked his life and his happiness on the miserable productions of his pen. The agonies of a disappointed author cannot, indeed, be contemplated without pain. If they can instruct, the following quotation will have its use.

Among the innumerable productions of Stockdale, was a History of Gibraltar; which might have been interesting, from his having resided there: in a moment of despair, like Medea, he immolated his unfortunate offspring.

"When I had arrived at within a day's work of its conclusion, in consequence of some immediate and mortifying accidents, *my literary adversity,* and all my other misfortunes, took *fast hold of my mind; oppressed it extremely; and reduced it to a stage of the deepest dejection and despondency.* In this unhappy view of life, I made a sudden resolu-

tion—*never more to prosecute the profession of an author*; to retire altogether from the world, and read only for consolation and amusement. *I committed to the flames my History of Gibraltar, and my translation of Marsollier's Life of Cardinal Ximenes*; for which the bookseller had refused to pay me the fify guineas according to agreement."

This claims a tear! Never were the agonies of literary disappointment more pathetically told.

But as it is impossible to have known poor deluded Stockdale, and not to have laughed at him more than to have wept for him—so the catastrophe of this author's literary life is as finely in character as all the acts. That catastrophe, of course, is his last poem.

After many years his poetical demon having been chained from the world, suddenly broke forth on the reports of a French invasion. The narrative shall proceed in his own inimitable manner.

"My poetical spirit excited me to write my poem of 'The Invincible Island.' I never found myself in a happier disposition to compose, nor ever wrote with more pleasure. I presumed warmly to hope, that unless *inveterate prejudice and malice* were as invincible as our island itself, it would have *the diffusive circulation* which I earnestly desired.

"Flushed with this idea—borne impetuously along by *ambition and by hope, though they had often deluded me,* I set off in the mail-coach from Durham, for London, on the 9th of December, 1797, at midnight, and in a severe storm. On my arrival in town, my poem was advertised, printed, and published with great expedition. It was printed for Clarke in New Bond-street. For several days the sale was very promising; and my bookseller as well as myself entertained sanguine hopes; *but the demand for the poem relaxed gradually!* From this last of many literary misfortunes, I inferred that *prejudice* and *malignity*, in my fate as an *author,* seemed, indeed, to be invincible."

The catastrophe of the poet is much better told than anything in the poem, which had not merit enough to support that interest which the temporary subject had excited.

Let the fate of Stockdale instruct some, and he will not have written in vain the "Memoirs of his Life and Writings." I have only turned the literary feature to our eye; it was combined with others, equally striking, from the same mould in which that was cast. Stockdale imagined he possessed an intuitive knowledge of human nature. He says, "everything that constituted my nature, my acquirements, my habits, and my fortune, conspired to let in upon me a complete knowledge of

human nature." A most striking proof of this knowledge is his parallel, after the manner of Plutarch, between Charles XII. and Himself! He frankly confesses there were some points in which he and the Swedish monarch did not exactly resemble each other. He thinks, for instance, that the King of Sweden had a somewhat more fervid and original genius than himself, and was likewise a little more robust in his person—but, subjoins Stockdale,

"Of our reciprocal fortune, achievements and conduct, some parts will be to *his* advantage, and some to *mine*."

Yet in regard to *Fame,* the main object between him and Charles XII., Stockdale imagined that his own

"Will not probably take its fixed and immovable station, and shine with its expanded and permanent splendour, till it consecrates his ashes, till it illumines his tomb!"

POPE hesitated at deciding on the durability of his poetry. PRIOR congratulates himself that he had not devoted all his days to rhymes. STOCKDALE imagines his fame is to commence at the very point (the tomb) where genius trembles its own may nearly terminate!

To close this article, I could wish to regale the poetical Stockdales with a delectable morsel of fraternal biography; such would be the life and its memorable close of ELKANAH SETTLE, who imagined himself to be a great poet, when he was placed on a level with Dryden by the town-wits, gentle spirits! to vex genius.

Settle's play of "The Empress of Morocco" was the very first "adorned with sculptures." However, in due time, the Whigs despising his rhymes, Settle tried his prose for the Tories; but he was a magician whose enchantments never charmed. He at length obtained the office of the city poet, when lord mayors were proud enough to have laureates in their annual pageants.

When Elkanah Settle published any *party-poem,* he sent copies round to the chiefs of the party, accompanied with addresses, to extort pecuniary presents. He had latterly one standard *Elegy* and *Epithalamium* printed off with blanks, which by the ingenious contrivance of filling up with the names of any considerable person, who died or was married, no one who was going out of life or entering it, *could pass scot-free* from the *tax levied by his hacknied muse.* The following letter accompanied his presentation copy to the Duke o Somerset, on a poem, in Latin and English, on the Hanover succession, when Elkanah wrote for the Whigs, as he had for the Tories:—

"SIR,

"Nothing but the greatness of the subject could encourage my presumption in laying the enclosed Essay at your Grace's feet, being with all profound humility, your Grace's most dutiful servant,

"E. SETTLE."

In the latter part of his life Settle dropped still lower, and became the poet of a booth at Bartholomew-fair, and composed drolls, for which the rival of Dryden, it seems, had a genius! — but it was little respected — for two great personages, "Mrs. Minns, and her daughter Mrs. Leigh," approving of their great Poet's happy invention in one of his own drolls, "St. George for England," of a green dragon, as large as life, insisted, as the tyrant of old did to the inventor of the brazen bull, that the first experiment should be made on the artist himself, and Settle was tried in his own dragon; he crept in with all his genius, and did "act the dragon, enclosed in a case of green leather of his own invention." The circumstance is recorded in the lively verse of Young, in his "Epistle to Pope concerning the authors of the age."

"Poor Elkanah, all other changes past,
For bread in Smithfield dragons hiss'd at last,
Spit streams of fire to make the butchers gape,
And found his manners suited to his shape;
Such is the fate of talents misapplied;
So lived your prototype, and so he died."

THE

LITERARY CHARACTER:

OR THE

HISTORY OF MEN OF GENIUS,

DRAWN FROM THEIR OWN FEELINGS AND CONFESSIONS.

TO

ROBERT SOUTHEY, LL.D.

&c. &c. &c.

In dedicating this Work to one of the most eminent literary characters of the age, I am experiencing a peculiar gratification, in which few, perhaps none, of my contemporaries can participate; for I am addressing him, whose earliest effusions attracted my regard, near half a century past; and during that awful interval of time, for fifty years is a trial of life whatever may be good in us, you have multiplied your talents, and have never lost a virtue.

When I turn from the uninterrupted studies of your domestic solitude to our metropolitan authors, the contrast, if not encouraging, is at least extraordinary. You are not unaware that the revolutions of Society have operated on our literature, and that new classes of readers have called forth new classes of writers. The causes, and the consequences, of the present state of this fugitive literature, might form an inquiry which would include some of the important topics which concern the PUBLIC MIND,—but an inquiry which might be invidious shall not disturb a page consecrated to the record of excellence. They who draw their inspiration from the hour must not, however, complain if with that hour they pass away.

I. D'ISRAELI.

March, 1839.

PREFACE.

FOR the fifth time I revise a subject which has occupied my inquiries from early life, with feelings still delightful, and an enthusiasm not wholly diminished.

Had not the principle upon which this work is constructed occurred to me in my youth, the materials which illustrate the literary character could never have been brought together. It was in early life that I conceived the idea of pursuing the history of genius by the similar events which had occurred to men of genius. Searching into literary history for the literary character formed a course of experimental philosophy in which every new essay verified a former trial, and confirmed a former truth. By the great philosophical principle of induction, inferences were deduced and results established, which, however vague and doubtful in speculation, are irresistible when the appeal is made to facts as they relate to others, and to feelings which must be decided on as they are passing in our own breast.

It is not to be inferred from what I have here stated, that I conceive that any single man of genius will resemble every man of genius; for not only man differs from man, but varies from himself in the different stages of human life. All that I assert is, that every man of genius will discover, sooner or later, that he belongs to the brotherhood of his class, and that he cannot escape from certain habits, and feelings, and disorders, which arise from the same temperament and sympathies, and are the necessary consequence of occupying the same position, and passing through the same moral existence. Whenever we compare men of genius with each other, the history of those who are no more will serve as a perpetual commentary on our contemporaries. There are, indeed, secret feelings which their prudence conceals, or their fears obscure, or their modesty shrinks from, or their pride rejects; but I have sometimes imagined that I have held the clue as they have lost themselves in their own labyrinth. I know that many, and some of great celebrity, have sym-

pathised with the feelings which inspired these volumes; nor, while I have elucidated the idiosyncrasy of genius, have I less studied the habits and characteristics of the lovers of literature.

It has been considered that the subject of this work might have been treated with more depth of metaphysical disquisition; and there has since appeared an attempt to combine with this investigation the medical science. A work, however, should be judged by its design and its execution, and not by any preconceived notion of what it ought to be according to the critic, rather than the author. The nature of this work is dramatic rather than metaphysical. It offers a narration or a description; a conversation or a monologue; an incident or a scene.

Perhaps I have sometimes too warmly apologised for the infirmities of men of genius. From others we may hourly learn to treat with levity the man of genius because he is *only* such. Perhaps also I may have been too fond of the subject, which has been for me an old and a favourite one—I may have exacted the literary character, beyond the scale by which society is willing to fix it. Yet what is this Society, so omnipotent so all-judicial? The society of to-day was not the society of yesterday. Its feelings, its thoughts, its manners, its rights, its wishes, and its wants are different and are changed: alike changed or alike created by those very literary characters whom it rarely comprehends and often would despise. Let us no longer look upon this retired and peculiar class as useless members of our busy race. There are mental as well as material labourers. The first are not less necessary; and as they are much rarer, so are they more precious. These are they whose "published labours" have benefited mankind—these are they whose thoughts can alone rear that beautiful fabric of social life, which it is the object of all good men to elevate or to support. To discover truth and to maintain it,—to develop the powers, to regulate the passions, to ascertain the privileges of man,—such have ever been, and such ever ought to be, the labours of AUTHORS! Whatever we enjoy of political and private happiness, our most necessary knowledge as well as our most refined pleasures, are alike owing to this class of men; and of these, some for glory, and often from benevolence, have shut themselves out from the very beings whom they love, and for whom they labour.

Upwards of forty years have elapsed since, composed in a distant county, and printed at a provincial press, I published "An Essay

on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character." To my own habitual and inherent defects were superadded those of my youth. The crude production was however not ill received, for the edition disappeared, and the subject was found more interesting than the writer.

During a long interval of twenty years, this little work was often recalled to my recollection by several, and by some who have since obtained celebrity. They imagined that their attachment to literary pursuits had been strengthened even by so weak an effort. An extraordinary circumstance concurred with these opinions. A copy accidentally fell into my hands which had formerly belonged to the great poetical genius of our times; and the singular fact, that it had been more than once read by him, and twice in two subsequent years at Athens, in 1810 and 1811, instantly convinced me that the volume deserved my renewed attention.

It was with these feelings that I was again strongly attracted to a subject from which, indeed, during the course of a studious life, it had never been long diverted. The consequence of my labours was the publication, in 1818, of an octavo volume, under the title of "The Literary Character, illustrated by the History of Men of Genius, drawn from their own feelings and confessions."

In the Preface to this Edition, in mentioning the fact respecting Lord Byron, which had been the immediate cause of its publication, I added these words: "I tell this fact assuredly not from any little vanity which it may appear to betray;—for the truth is, were I not as liberal and as candid in respect to my own productions, as I hope I am to others, I could not have been gratified by the present circumstance; for the marginal notes of the noble author convey no flattery;—but amidst their pungency, and sometimes their truth, the circumstance that a man of genius could reperuse this slight effusion at two different periods of his life, was a sufficient authority, at least for an author, to return it once more to the anvil."

Some time after the publication of this Edition of "The Literary Character," which was in fact a new work, I was shown, through the kindness of an English gentleman lately returned from Italy, a copy of it, which had been given to him by Lord Byron, and which again contained marginal notes by the noble author. These were peculiarly interesting, and were chiefly occasioned by observations on his character, which appeared in the work.

In 1822 I published a new edition of this work, greatly enlarged, and in two volumes. I took this opportunity of inserting the Manuscript Notes of Lord Byron, with the exception of one, which, however characteristic of the amiable feelings of the noble poet, and however gratifying to my own, I had no wish to obtrude on the notice of the public [1].

Soon after the publication of this third Edition, I received the following letter from his Lordship :—

"Montenero, Villa Dupuy, near Leghorn, June 10, 1822.

"DEAR SIR,—

"If you will permit me to call you so,—I had some time ago taken up my pen at Pisa, to thank you for the present of your new edition of the 'Literary Character,' which has often been to me a consolation, and always a pleasure. I was interrupted, however, partly by business, and partly by vexation of different kinds,—for I have not very long ago lost a child by a fever, and I have had a good deal of petty trouble with the laws of this lawless country, on account of the prosecution of a servant for an attack upon a cowardly scoundrel of a dragoon, who drew his sword upon some unarmed Englishmen, and whom I had done the honour to mistake for an officer, and to treat like a gentleman. He turned out to be neither, like many other with medals, and in uniform; but he paid for his brutality with a severe and dangerous wound, inflicted by nobody knows whom, for, of three suspected, and two arrested, they have been able to identify neither; which is strange, since he was wounded in the presence of thousands, in a public street, during a feast-day and full promenade. – But to return to things more analogous to the 'Literary Character :' I wish to say, that had I known that the book was to fall into your hands, or that the MS. notes you have thought worthy of publication would have attracted your attention, I would have made them more copious, and perhaps not so careless.

[1] As everything connected with the reading of a mind like Lord BYRON'S is interesting to the philosophical inquirer, this note may now be preserved. On that passage of the Preface of the second Edition which I have already quoted, his Lordship was thus pleased to write:

"I was wrong, but I was young and petulant, and probably wrote down anything, little thinking that those observations would be betrayed to the author, whose abilities I have always respected, and whose works in general I have read oftener than perhaps those of any English author whatever, except such as treat of Turkey.'

"I really cannot know whether I am, or am not, the genius you are pleased to call me,—but I am very willing to put up with the mistake, if it be one. It is a title dearly enough bought by most men, to render it endurable, even when not quite clearly made out, which it never *can* be, till the Posterity, whose decisions are merely dreams to ourselves, have sanctioned or denied it, while it can touch us no further.

"Mr. Murray is in possession of a MS. memoir of mine (not to be published till I am in my grave), which, strange as it may seem, I never read over since it was written, and have no desire to read over again. In it I have told what, as far as I know, is the *truth*—*not* the *whole* truth—for if I had done so, I must have involved much private, and some dissipated history: but, nevertheless, nothing but truth, as far as regard for others permitted it to appear.

"I do not know whether you have seen those MSS.; but, as you are curious in such things as relate to the human mind, I should feel gratified if you had. I also sent him (Murray), a few days since, a Common-place Book, by my friend Lord Clare, containing a few things, which may perhaps aid his publication in case of his surviving me. If there are any questions which you would like to ask me, as connected with your philosophy of the literary mind (*if* mine be a literary mind), I will answer them fairly, or give a reason for *not*, good—bad—or indifferent. At present, I am paying the penalty of having helped to spoil the public taste; for, as long as I wrote in the false exaggerated style of youth and the times in which we live, they applauded me to the very echo; and within these few years, when I have endeavoured at better things, and written what I suspect to have the principle of duration in it: the Church, the Chancellor, and all men, even to my grand patron, Francis Jeffrey, Esq., of the Edinburgh Review, have risen up against me, and my later publications. Such is Truth! men dare not look her in the face, except by degrees; they mistake her for a Gorgon, instead of knowing her to be Minerva. I do not mean to apply this mythological simile to my own endeavours, but I have only to turn over a few pages of your volumes, to find innumerable and far more illustrious instances. It is lucky that I am of a temper not to be easily turned aside, though by no means difficult to irritate. But I am making a dissertation, instead of writing a letter. I write to you from the Villa Dupuy, near Leghorn, with the islands of Elba and Corsica visible from my balcony, and my old friend the Mediterranean rolling blue at my feet. As long as I retain my feeling and my passion for Nature, I c

partly soften or subdue my other passions, and resist or endure those of others.

"I have the honour to be, truly, your obliged and faithful servant,

"NOEL BYRON.

"*To I. D'Israeli, Esq.*

The ill-starred expedition to Greece followed this Letter.

This work, conceived in youth, executed by the research of manhood, and associated with the noblest feelings of our nature is an humble but fervent tribute, offered to the memory of those Master Spirits from whose labours, as BURKE eloquently describes, "their country receives permanent service: those who know how to make the silence of their closets more beneficial to the world, than all the noise and bustle of courts, senates, and camps."

ON THE

LITERARY CHARACTER.

CHAPTER I.

Of Literary Characters, and of the Lovers of Literature and Art.

DIFFUSED over enlightened Europe, an order of men has arisen, who, uninfluenced by the interests or the passions which give an impulse to the other classes of society, are connected by the secret links of congenial pursuits, and, insensibly to themselves, are combining in the same common labours, and participating in the same divided glory. In the metropolitan cities of Europe the same authors are now read, and the same opinions become established: the Englishman is familiar with Machiavel and Montesquieu; the Italian and the Frenchman with Bacon and Locke; and the same smiles and tears are awakened on the banks of the Thames, of the Seine, or of the Guadalquivir, by Shakespeare, Molière, and Cervantes:

> Contemporains de tous les hommes,
> Et citoyens de tous les lieux.

A khan of Tartary admired the wit of Molière, and discovered the Tartuffe in the Crimea; and had this ingenious sovereign survived the translation which he ordered, the immortal labour of the comic satirist of France might have laid the foundation of good taste even among the Turks and the Tartars. We see the Italian Pignotti referring to the opinion of an English critic, Lord Bolingbroke, for decisive authority on the peculiar characteristics of the historian Guicciardini: the German Schlegel writes on our Shakespeare like a patriot; and while the Italians admire the noble scenes which our Flaxman has drawn from their great poet, they have rejected the feeble attempts of their native artists. Such is the wide and the perpetual influence of this living intercourse of literary minds.

Scarcely have two centuries elapsed since the literature of every nation was limited to its fatherland, and men of genius long could only hope for the spread of their fame in the single

language of ancient Rome; which for them had ceased to be natural, and could never be popular. It was in the intercourse of the wealth, the power, and the novel arts of the nations of Europe, that they learned each other's languages; and they discovered that, however their manners varied as they arose from their different customs, they participated in the same intellectual faculties, suffered from the same wants, and were alive to the same pleasures; they perceived that there were no conventional fashions, nor national distinctions, in abstract truths and fundamental knowledge. A new spirit seems to bring them nearer to each other: and, as if literary Europe were intent to form but one people out of the populace of mankind, they offer their reciprocal labours; they pledge to each other the same opinions; and that knowledge which, like a small river, takes its source from one spot, at length mingles with the ocean-stream common to them all.

But those who stand connected with this literary community are not always sensible of the kindred alliance; even a genius of the first order has not always been aware that he is the founder of a society, and that there will ever be a brotherhood where there is a father-genius.

These literary characters are partially, and with a melancholy colouring, exhibited by JOHNSON. "To talk in private, to think in solitude, to inquire or to answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror; and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself." Thus thought this great writer during those sad probationary years of genius, when

> "Slow rises worth, by *poverty* depress'd;"

not yet conscious that he himself was devoting his days to cast the minds of his contemporaries and of the succeeding age in the mighty mould of his own; for JOHNSON was of that order of men whose individual genius becomes that of a people. A prouder conception rose in the majestic mind of MILTON, of "that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose PUBLISHED LABOURS advanced the good of mankind."

The LITERARY CHARACTER is a denomination which, however vague, defines the pursuits of the individual, and separates him from other professions, although it frequently occurs that he is himself a member of one. Professional characters are modified by the change of manners, and are usually national; while the literary character, from the objects in which it concerns itself, retains a more permanent, and necessarily a more independent nature.

Formed by the same habits, and influenced by the same motives, notwithstanding the contrast of talents and tempers, and the remoteness of times and places, the literary character has ever preserved among its followers the most striking family resemblance. The passion for study, the delight in books, the desire of solitude and celebrity, the obstructions of human life, the character of their pursuits, the uniformity of their habits, the triumphs and the disappointments of literary glory, were as truly described by CICERO and the younger PLINY as by PETRARCH and ERASMUS, and as they have been by HUME and GIBBON. And this similarity too may equally be remarked with respect to that noble passion of the lovers of literature and of art for collecting together their mingled treasures; a thirst which was as insatiable in ATTICUS and PEIRESC as in our CRACHERODE and TOWNLEY. We trace the feelings of our literary contemporaries in all ages, and among every people who have ranked with nations far advanced in civilisation; for among these may be equally observed both the great artificers of knowledge, and those who preserve unbroken the vast chain of human acquisitions. The one have stamped the images of their minds on their works, and the others have preserved the circulation of this intellectual coinage, this

> ——————— Gold of the dead,
> Which Time does still disperse, but not devour.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Adversaries of Literary Men among themselves.—Matter-of-fact Men, and Men of Wit.—The Political Economist.—Of those who abandon their studies.—Men in office.—The arbiters of public opinion.—Those who treat the pursuits of literature with levity.

THE pursuits of literature have been openly or insidiously lowered by those literary men who, from motives not always difficult to penetrate, are eager to confound the ranks in the republic of letters, maliciously conferring the honours of authorship on that "Ten Thousand" whose recent list is not so much a muster-roll of heroes, as a table of population [1].

[1] We have a Dictionary of "Ten Thousand living Authors" of our own nation. The alphabet is fatal by its juxta-positions. In France, before the Revolution, they counted about twenty thousand writers. When David would have his people numbered, Joab asked, "Why doth my lord delight in this?" In political economy, the population returns may be useful, provided they be correct; but in the literary republic, its numerical force diminishes the strength of the empire. "There you are numbered, we had rather you were weighed." Put

Matter-of-fact men, or men of knowledge, and men of wit and taste, were long inimical to each other's pursuits [1]. The Royal Society in its origin could hardly support itself against the ludicrous attacks of literary men [2], and the Antiquarian Society has afforded them amusement. Such partial views have ceased to contract the understanding. Science yields a new substance to literature; Literature combines new associations for the votaries of knowledge. There is no subject in nature, and in the history of man, which will not associate with our feelings and our curiosity, whenever genius extends its awakening hand. The antiquary, the naturalist, the architect, the chemist, and even writers on medical topics, have in our days asserted their claims, and discovered their long-interrupted relationship with the great family of genius and literature.

A new race of jargonists, the barbarous metaphysicians of political economy, have struck at the essential existence of the productions of genius in literature and art; for, appreciating them by their own standard, they have miserably degraded the professors. Absorbed in the contemplation of material objects, and rejecting whatever does not enter into their own restricted notion of "utility," these cold arithmetical seers, with nothing but millions in their imagination, and whose choicest works of art are spinning-jennies, have valued the intellectual tasks of the library and the studio by "the demand and the supply." They have sunk these pursuits into the class of what they term "unproductive labour;" and by another result of their line and level system, men of letters with some other important characters, are forced down into the class "of buffoons, singers, opera-dancers,

aside the puling infants of literature, of whom such a mortality occurs in its nurseries; such as the writers of the single sermon, the single law-tract, the single medical dissertation, etc.; all writers whose subject is single, without being singular; count for nothing the inefficient mob of mediocrists; and strike out our literary *charlatans;* and then our alphabet of men of genius will not consist, as it now does, of the four-and-twenty letters.

[1] The cause is developed in the chapter on *Want of mutual Esteem.*

[2] See BUTLER, in his "Elephant in the Moon." SOUTH, in his oration at the opening of the theatre at Oxford, passed this bitter sarcasm on the naturalists, —"*Mirantur nihil nisi pulices, pediculos—et se ipsos;*"—nothing they admire but fleas, lice, and themselves! The illustrious SLOANE endured a long persecution from the bantering humour of Dr. KING. One of the most amusing declaimers against what he calls *les Sciences des faux Sçavans* is Father MALEBRANCHE; he is far more severe than Cornelius Agrippa, and he long preceded ROUSSEAU, so famous for his invective against the sciences. The seventh chapter of his fourth book is an inimitable satire. "The principal excuse," says he, "which engages men in *false studies*, is, that they have attached the *idea of learned* where they should not." Astronomy, antiquarianism, history, ancient poetry, and natural history, are all mowed down by his metaphysical scythe. When we become acquainted with the *idea* Father Malabranche attaches to the term *learned*, we understand him—and we smile.

etc." In a system of political economy it has been discovered, that "that *unprosperous race* of men, called *men of letters*, must *necessarily* occupy their present *forlorn state* in society much as formerly, when a scholar and a beggar seem to have been terms very nearly synonymous [1]." In their commercial agricultural, and manufacturing view of human nature, addressing society by its most pressing wants and its coarsest feelings, these theorists limit the moral and physical existence of man by speculative tables of population, planing and levelling society down in their carpentry of human nature. They would yoke and harness the loftier spirits to one common and vulgar destination. Man is considered only as he wheels on the wharf, or as he spins in the factory; but man, as a recluse being of meditation, or impelled to action by more generous passions has been struck out of the system of our political economists. It is, however, only among their "unproductive labourers" that we shall find those men of leisure, whose habitual pursuits are consumed in the development of thought, and the gradual accessions of knowledge; those men of whom the sage of Judea declares, that "It is he who hath little business who shall become wise: how can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and whose talk is of bullocks? But THEY,"—the men of leisure and study,—"WILL MAINTAIN THE STATE OF THE WORLD!" The prosperity and the happiness of a people include something more evident and more permanent than "the Wealth of a Nation [2]."

There is a more formidable class of men of genius, who are heartless to the interests of literature. Like CORNELIUS

[1] Wealth of Nations, i. 182.

[2] Since this murmur has been uttered against the degrading views of some of those theorists, it afforded me pleasure to observe that Mr. Malthus has fully sanctioned its justness. On this head, at least, Mr. Malthus has amply confuted his stubborn and tasteless brothers. Alluding to the productions of genius, this writer observes, that, "to estimate the value of NEWTON'S discoveries, or the delight communicated by SHAKESPEARE and MILTON, by the *price* at which their works have sold, would be but a poor measure of the degree in which they have elevated and enchanted their country." Principles of Pol. Econ. p. 48. And hence he acknowledges, that "*some unproductive labour is of much more use and importance* than productive labour, but is incapable of being the subject of the gross calculations which relate to national wealth; contributing to *other sources of happiness* beside those which are derived from matter." Political economists would have smiled with contempt on the querulous PORSON, who once observed, that "it seemed to him very hard, that with all his critical knowledge of Greek, he could not get a hundred pounds." They would have demonstrated to the learned Grecian, that this was just as it ought to be; the same occurrence had even happened to HOMER in his own country, where Greek ought to have fetched a higher price than in England; but, that both might have obtained this hundred pounds, had the Grecian bard and the Greek professor been employed at the same stocking-frame together, instead of the Iliad.

AGRIPPA, who wrote on "the vanity of the arts and sciences," many of these are only tracing in the arts which they have abandoned their own inconstant tempers, their feeble tastes, and their disordered judgments. But with others of this class, study has usually served as the instrument, not as the object, of their ascent; it was the ladder which they once climbed, but it was not the eastern star which guided and inspired. Such literary characters were WARBURTON, WATSON, and WILKES, who abandoned their studies when their studies had served a purpose.

WATSON gave up his pursuits in chemistry the instant he obtained their limited reward, and the laboratory closed when the professorship was instituted. Such was the penurious love he bore for the science which he had adopted, that the extraordinary discoveries of thirty years subsequent to his own first essays, could never excite even an idle inquiry. He tells us that he preferred "his larches to his laurels:" the wretched jingle expressed the mere worldliness that dictated it. In the same spirit of calculation with which he had at first embraced science and literature, he abandoned them; and his ingenuous confession is a memorable example of that egotistic pride which betrayed in the literary character the creature of selfism and political ambition.

We are accustomed to consider WILKES merely as a political adventurer, and it may surprise to find this "city chamberlain" ranked among professed literary characters: yet in his variable life there was a period when he cherished the aspirations of a votary. Once he desired Lloyd to announce the edition of Churchill, which he designed to enrich by a commentary; and his correspondence on this subject, which has never appeared, would, as he himself tells us, afford a variety of hints and communications. WILKES was then warmed by literary glory; for on his retirement into Italy, he declared, "I mean to give myself entirely to our friend's work, and to my History of England. I wish to equal the dignity of Livy: I am sure the greatness and majesty of our nation demand an historian equal to him." They who have only heard of the intriguing demagogue, and witnessed the last days of the used voluptuary, may hardly imagine that WILKES had ever cherished such elevated projects; but mob-politics made this adventurer's fortune, which fell to the lot of an epicurean: and the literary glory he once sought he lived to ridicule, in the immortal diligence of Lord Chatham and of Gibbon. Dissolving life away, and consuming all his feelings on himself, WILKES left his nearest relatives what he left the world—the memory of an anti-social being! This wit, who has bequeathed to us no wit; this man of genius, who has formed no work of genius; this bold advocate for popular freedom, who sunk his

patriotism in the chamberlainship; was indeed desirous of leaving behind him some trace of the life of an *escroc,* in a piece of autobiography, which, for the benefit of the world, has been thrown to the flames.

Men who have ascended into office through its gradations, or have been thrown upwards by accident, are apt to view others in a cloud of passions and politics. They who once commanded us by their eloquence, come at length to suspect the eloquent; and in their "pride of office," would now drive us by that single force of despotism which is the corruption of political power. Our late great minister, Pitt, has been reproached even by his friends for the contemptuous indifference with which he treated literary men. Perhaps BURKE himself, long a literary character, might incur some portion of this censure, by involving the character itself in the odium of a monstrous political sect. These political characters resemble Adrian VI., who obtaining the tiara as the reward of his studies, afterwards persecuted literary men, and, say the Italians, dreaded lest his brothers might shake the pontificate itself [1].

'Worse fares it with authors when minds of this cast become the arbiters of public opinion; for the greatest of writers may unquestionably be forced into ridiculous attitudes, by the well-known artifices practised by modern criticism. The elephant, no longer in his forest struggling with his hunters, but falling entrapped by a paltry snare, comes at length, in the height of ill-fortune, to dance on heated iron at the bidding of the pantaloon of a fair. Whatever such critics may plead to mortify the vanity of authors, at least it requires as much vanity to give effect to their own polished effrontery [2]. Scorn, sarcasm, and invective, the

[1] It has been suspected that Adrian VI. has been calumniated, for that this pontiff was only too sudden to begin the reform he meditated. But Adrian VI. was a scholastic whose austerity turned away with contempt from all ancient art, and was no brother to contemporary genius. He was one of the *cui bono* race, a branch of our political economists. When they showed him the Laocoön, Adrian silenced their raptures by the frigid observation, that all such things were *idola antiquorum:* and ridiculed the *amena letteratura* till every man of genius retreated from his court. Had Adrian's reign extended beyond its brief period, men of taste in their panic imagined that in his zeal the Pontiff would have calcined the fine statues of ancient art, to expedite the edifice of St. Peter.

[2] Listen to a confession and a recantation of an illustrious sinner; the Coryphæus of the amusing and new-found art, or artifice, of modern criticism. In the character of BURNS, the Edinburgh Reviewer, with his peculiar felicity of manner, attacked the character of the man of genius; but when Mr. Campbell vindicated his immortal brother with all the inspiration of the family feeling, our critic, who is one of those great artists who acquire at length the utmost indifference even for their own works, generously avowed, that, "a certain tone of exaggeration is incidental *we fear to the sort of writing in which we are*

egotism of the vain, and the irascibility of the petulant, where they succeed in debilitating genius of the consciousness of its powers, are practising the witchery of that ancient superstition of "tying the knot," which threw the youthful bridegroom into utter despair by its ideal forcefulness [1].

That spirit of levity which would shake the columns of society, by detracting from or burlesquing the elevating principles which have produced so many illustrious men, has recently attempted to reduce the labours of literature to a mere curious amusement: a finished composition is likened to a skilful game of billiards, or a piece of music finely executed, and curious researches, to charades and other insignificant puzzles. With such, an author is an idler who will not be idle, amusing or fatiguing others who are completely so. The result of a work of genius is contracted to the art of writing; but this art is only its last perfection. Inspiration is drawn from a deeper source, enthusiasm is diffused through contagious pages, and without these movements of the soul, how poor and artificial a thing is that sparkling composition, which flashes with the cold vibrations of mere art, or artifice! We have been recently told, on critical authority, that "a great genius should never allow himself to be sensible to his own celebrity, nor deem his pursuits of much consequence, however important or successful." A sort of catholic doctrine, to mortify an author into a saint, extinguishing the glorious appetite of fame by one Lent all the year, and self-flagellation every day! BUFFON and GIBBON, VOLTAIRE and POPE, who gave to literature all the cares, the industry, and the glory of their lives, assuredly were too "sensible to their celebrity, and deemed their pursuits of much consequence,"

engaged. Reckoning a little too much on the dulness of our readers, we are often led to *overstate our sentiments*: when a little *controversial warmth* is added to a little *love of effect*, an excess of colouring steals over the canvas, which ultimately offends no eye so much as our own." But what if this *love of effect* in the critic has been too often obtained at the entire cost of the literary characters the fruits of whose studious days at this moment lie withering in oblivion, or whose genius the critic has deterred from pursuing the career it had opened for itself! To have silenced the learned, and to have terrified the modest, is the barbarous triumph of a Hun or a Vandal; and the vaunted freedom of the literary republic departed from us, when the vacillating public blindly consecrated the edicts of the demagogues of literature, whoever they may be.

A reaction appears in the burlesque or bantering spirit. While one faction drives out another, the abuse of extraordinary powers is equally fatal. Thus we are consoled while we are afflicted, and we are protected while we are degraded.

[1] *Nouer l'aiguillette*, of which the extraordinary effect is described by Montaigne, is an Oriental custom still practised.—*Mr. Hobhouse's Journey through Albania*, p. 528.

particularly when "important and successful." The self-possession of great authors sustains their own genius by a sense of their own glory.

Such, then, are some of the domestic treasons of the literary character against literature—"Et tu, Brute!" But the hero of literature outlives his assassins, and might address them in that language of poetry and affection with which a Mexican king reproached his traitorous counsellors: "You were the feathers of my wings, and the eyelids of my eyes."

CHAPTER III.

Of artists, in the history of men of literary genius.—Their habits and pursuits analogous.—The nature of their genius is similar in their distinct works.—Shown by their parallel eras, and by a common end pursued by both.

ARTISTS and literary men, alike insulated in their studies, pass through the same permanent discipline; and thus it has happened that the same habits and feelings, and the same fortunes, have accompanied men who have sometimes unhappily imagined their pursuits not to be analogous.

> Let the artist share
> The palm; he shares the peril, and dejected
> Faints o'er the labour unapproved—alas!
> Despair and genius!—

The congenial histories of literature and art describe the same periodical revolutions and parallel eras. After the golden age of Latinity, we gradually slide into the silver, and at length precipitately descend into the iron. In the history of painting, after the splendid epoch of Raphael, Titian, and Corregio, we meet with pleasure the Carraccis, Domenichino, Guido, and Albano; as we read Paterculus, Quintilian, Seneca, Juvenal, and Silius Italicus, after their immortal masters, Cicero, Livy, Virgil, and Horace.

It is evident that MILTON, MICHAEL ANGELO, and HANDEL, belong to the same order of minds; the same imaginative powers, and the same sensibility, are only operating with different materials. LANZI, the delightful historian of the *Storia Pittorica*, is prodigal of his comparisons of the painters with the poets; his delicacy of perception discerned the refined analogies which for ever unite the two sisters, and he fondly dwelt on the transplanted flowers of the two arts: "*Chi sente che sia Tibullo nel poetare sente chi sia Andrea (del Sarto) nel dipingere;*" He who feels what TIBULLUS is in poetry, feels what ANDREA is

in painting. MICHAEL ANGELO, from his profound conception of the terrible and the difficult in art, was called its DANTE; from the Italian poet the Italian sculptor derived the grandeur of his ideas; and indeed the visions of the bard had deeply nourished the artist's imagination; for once he had poured about the margins of his own copy their ethereal inventions, in the rapid designs of his pen. And so Bellori informs us of a very curious volume in manuscript, composed by RUBENS, which contained, among other topics concerning art, descriptions of the passions and actions of men, drawn from the poets, and demonstrated to the eye by the painters. Here were battles, shipwrecks, sports, groups, and other incidents, which were transcribed from Virgil and other poets, and by their side RUBENS had copied what he had met with on those subjects from Raphael and the antique.

The poet and the painter are only truly great by the mutual influences of their studies, and the jealousy of glory has only produced an idle contest. This old family-quarrel for precedence was renewed by our estimable President, in his brilliant "Rhymes on Art;" where he maintains that "the narrative of an action is not comparable to the action itself before the eyes;" while the enthusiast BARRY considers painting as "poetry realised." This error of genius, perhaps first caught from Richardson's bewildering pages, was strengthened by the extravagant principle adopted by DARWIN, who, to exalt his solitary talent of descriptive poetry, asserted that "the essence of poetry was picture." The philosophical critic will find no difficulty in assigning to each sister-art her distinct province; and it is only a pleasing delirium, in the enthusiasm of artists, which has confused the boundaries of these arts. The dread pathetic story of Dante's Ugolino, under the plastic hand of Michael Angelo, formed the subject of a basso-relievo; and Reynolds, with his highest effort, embodied the terrific conception of the poet as much as his art permitted: but assuredly both these great artists would never have claimed the precedence of the Dantesc genius, and might have hesitated at the rivalry.

Who has not heard of that one common principle which unites the intellectual arts, and who has not felt that the nature of their genius is similar in their distinct works! Hence curious inquiries could never decide whether the group of the Laocoön in sculpture preceded or was borrowed from that in poetry. Lessing conjectures that the sculptor copied the poet. It is evident that the agony of Laocoön was the common end where the sculptor and the poet were to meet; and we may observe that the artists in marble and in verse skilfully adapted their variations to their respective art: the one having to prefer the *nude*, rejected the veiling fillet from the forehead, that he might

not conceal its deep expression, and the drapery of the sacrificial robe, that he might display the human form in visible agony; but the other, by the charm of verse, could invest the priest with the pomp of the pontifical robe without hiding from us the interior sufferings of the human victim. We see they obtained by different means, adapted to their respective arts, that common end which each designed; but who will decide which invention preceded the other, or who was the greater artist?

This approximation of men apparently of opposite pursuits is so natural, that when GESNER, in his inspiring letter on landscape-painting, recommends to the young painter a constant study of poetry and literature, the impatient artist is made to exclaim, "Must we combine with so many other studies those which belong to literary men? Must we read as well as paint?" "It is useless to reply to this question; for some important truths must be instinctively felt, perhaps the fundamental ones in the arts." A truly imaginative artist, whose enthusiasm was never absent when he meditated on the art he loved, BARRY, thus vehemently broke forth: "Go home from the academy, light up your lamps, and exercise yourselves in the creative part of your art, with Homer, with Livy, and all the great characters ancient and modern, for your companions and counsellors." This genial intercourse of literature with art may be proved by painters who have suggested subjects to poets, and poets who have selected them for painters. GOLDSMITH suggested the subject of the tragic and pathetic picture of Ugolino to the pencil of REYNOLDS.

All the classes of men in society have their peculiar sorrows and enjoyments, as they have their peculiar habits and characteristics. In the history of men of genius we may often open the secret story of their minds, for they have above others the privilege of communicating their own feelings; and every life of a man of genius, composed by himself, presents us with the experimental philosophy of the mind. By living with their brothers, and contemplating their masters, they will judge from consciousness less erroneously than from discussion; and in forming comparative views and parallel situations, they will discover certain habits and feelings, and find these reflected in themselves.

SYDENHAM has beautifully said, whoever describes a violet exactly as to its colour, taste, smell, form, and other properties, will find the description agree in most particulars with all the violets in the universe.

CHAPTER IV.

Of natural genius.—Minds constitutionally different cannot have an equal aptitude.—Genius not the result of habit and education.—Originates in peculiar qualities of the mind.—The predisposition of genius.—A substitution for the white paper of Locke [1].

THAT faculty in art which individualises the artist, belonging to him and to no other, and which in a work forms that creative part whose likeness is not found in any other work,—is it inherent in the constitutional dispositions of the creator, or can it be formed by patient acquisition?

Astonished at their own silent and obscure progress, some have imagined that they had formed their genius solely by their own studies; when they generated, they conceived that they had acquired; and, losing the distinction between nature and habit, with fatal temerity the idolatry of philosophy substituted something visible and palpable, yet shaped by the most opposite fancies, called a Theory, for nature herself! Men of genius, whose great occupation is to be conversant with the inspirations of nature, made up a factitious one among themselves, and assumed that they could operate without the intervention of the occult original. But Nature would not be mocked; and whenever this race of idolaters have worked without her agency, she has afflicted them with the most stubborn sterility.

Theories of genius are the peculiar constructions of our own philosophical times; ages of genius had passed away, and they left no other record than their works; no preconcerted theory described the workings of the imagination to be without imagination, nor did they venture to teach how to invent invention.

The character of genius, viewed as the effect of habit and education, on the principle of the equality of the human mind, infers that men have an equal aptitude for the work of genius: a paradox which, with a more fatal one, came from the French school, and arose probably from an equivocal expression.

Locke employed the well-known comparison of the mind

[1] In the second edition of this work in 1818, I touched on some points of this inquiry in the second chapter: I almost despaired to find any philosopher sympathise with the subject, so invulnerable, they imagine, are the entrenchments of their theories. I was agreeably surprised to find these ideas taken up in the Edinburgh Review for August, 1820, in an entertaining article on Reynolds. I have, no doubt, profited by the perusal, though this chapter was prepared before I met with that spirited vindication of "an inherent difference in the organs or faculties to receive impressions of any kind."

with "white paper void of all characters," to free his famous "Inquiry" from that powerful obstacle to his system, the absurd belief of "innate ideas," of notions of objects before objects were presented to observation. Our philosopher considered that this simple analogy sufficiently described the manner in which he conceived the impressions of the senses write themselves on the mind. His French pupils, the amusing Helvetius, or Diderot, for they were equally concerned in the paradoxical "L'Esprit," inferred that this blank paper served also as an evidence that men had *an equal aptitude for genius,* just as the blank paper reflects to us whatever characters we trace on it. This *equality of minds* gave rise to the same monstrous doctrine in the science of metaphysics which that of another verbal misconception, *the equality of men,* did in that of politics. The Scottish metaphysicians powerfully combined to illustrate the mechanism of the mind,—an important and a curious truth; for as rules and principles exist in the nature of things, and when discovered are only thence drawn out, genius unconsciously conducts itself by a uniform process; and when this process had been traced, they inferred that what was done by some men, under the influence of fundamental laws which regulate the march of the intellect, must also be in the reach of others, who, in the same circumstances, apply themselves to the same study. But these metaphysicians resemble anatomists, under whose knife all men are alike. They know the structure of the bones, the movement of the muscles, and where the connecting ligaments lie! but the invisible principle of life flies from their touch. It is the practitioner on the living body who studies in every individual that peculiarity of constitution which forms the idiosyncrasy.

Under the influence of such novel theories of genius, JOHNSON defined it as "A Mind of large general powers ACCIDENTALLY determined by some *particular direction.*" On this principle we must infer that the reasoning LOCKE, or the arithmetical DE MOIVRE, could have been the musical and fairy SPENSER [1]. This conception of the nature of genius became prevalent. It induced the philosophical BECCARIA to assert that every individual had an equal degree of genius for poetry and eloquence;

[1] It is more dangerous to define than to describe; a dry definition excludes so much, an ardent description at once appeals to our sympathies. How much more comprehensible our great critic becomes, when he nobly describes genius, "as the power of mind that collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the energy without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert!" And it is this POWER OF MIND, this primary faculty and native aptitude, which we deem may exist separately from education and habit, since these are often found unaccompanied by genius.

it runs through the philosophy of the elegant Dugald Stewart; and REYNOLDS, the pupil of Johnson in literature, adopting the paradox, constructed his automatic system on this principle of *equal aptitude*. He says, "this excellence, however expressed by genius, taste, or the gift of Heaven, I am confident may be *acquired*." Reynolds had the modesty to fancy that so many rivals, unendowed by nature, might have equalled the magic of his own pencil: but his theory of industry, so essential to genius, yet so useless without it, too long stimulated the drudges of art, and left us without a Corregio or a Raphael! Another man of genius caught the fever of the new system. CURRIE, in his eloquent Life of Burns, swells out the scene of genius to a startling magnificence; for he asserts, that "the talents necessary to the construction of an Iliad, under different discipline and application, might have led armies to victory or kingdoms to prosperity; might have wielded the thunder of eloquence, or discovered and enlarged the sciences." All this we find in the *text;* but in the clear intellect of this man of genius a vast number of intervening difficulties started up, and in a copious *note* the numerous exceptions show that the assumed theory requires no other refutation than what the theorist has himself so abundantly and so judiciously supplied. There is something ludicrous in the result of a theory of genius which would place HOBBES and ERASMUS, those timid and learned recluses, to open a campaign with the military invention and physical intrepidity of a Marlborough; or conclude that the romantic bard of the "Fairy Queen," amidst the quickly-shifting scenes of his visionary reveries, could have deduced, by slow and patient watchings of the mind, the system and the demonstrations of Newton.

Such theorists deduce the faculty called genius from a variety of exterior or secondary causes: zealously rejecting the notion that genius may originate in constitutional dispositions, and be only a mode of the individual's existence, they deny that minds are differently constituted. Habit and education, being more palpable and visible in their operations, and progressive in the development of the intellectual faculties, have been imagined fully sufficient to make the creative faculty a subject of acquirement.

But when these theorists had discovered the curious fact, that we have owed to *accident* several men of genius, and when they laid open some sources which influenced genius in its progress they did not go one step further, they did not inquire whether such accidents had ever supplied the *want of genius* in the individual. Effects were here again mistaken for causes. Could Spenser have kindled a poet in Cowley, Richardson a painter

in Reynolds, and Descartes a metaphysician in Malebranche, if those master-minds, pointed out as having been such from *accident,* had not first received the indelible mint-stamp struck by the hand of Nature, and which, to give it a name, we may be allowed to call the *predisposition* of genius? The *accidents* so triumphantly held forth, which are imagined to have created the genius of these men, have occurred to a thousand who have run the same career; but how does it happen that the multitude remain a multitude, and the man of genius arrives alone at the goal?

This theory, which long dazzled its beholders, was in time found to stand in contradiction with itself, and perpetually with their own experience. Reynolds pared down his decision in the progress of his lectures, often wavered, often altered, and grew more confused as he lived longer to look about him[1]. The infirm votaries of the new philosophy, with all their sources of genius open before them, went on multiplying mediocrity, while inherent genius, true to nature, still continued rare in its solitary independence.

Others have strenuously denied that we are born with any peculiar species of mind, and resolve the mysterious problem into *capacity,* of which men only differ in the degree. They can perceive no distinction between the poetical and the mathematical genius; and they conclude that a man of genius, possessing a general capacity, may become whatever he chooses, but is determined by his first acquired habit to be what he is[2].

In substituting the term *capacity* for that of *genius,* the origin or nature remains equally occult. How is it acquired, or how is it inherent? To assert that any man of genius may become what he wills, those must fervently protest against who feel that the character of genius is such that it cannot be other than it

[1] I transcribe the last opinions of Mr. Edgeworth. "As to original genius, and the effect of education in forming taste or directing talent, the last revisal of his opinions was given by himself, in the introduction to the second edition of Professional Education. He was strengthened in his belief, that many of the great differences of intellect which appear in men, depend more upon the early cultivating the habit of attention than upon any disparity between the powers of one individual and another. Perhaps, he latterly allowed that there is more difference than he had formerly admitted between the *natural powers* of different persons; but not so great as is generally supposed."—*Edgeworth's Memoirs,* ii. 388.

[2] Johnson once asserted, that "the supposition of one man having more imagination, another more judgment, is not true; it is only one man has *more mind* than another. He who has vigour may walk to the east as well as the west, if he happens to turn his head that way." Godwin was persuaded that all genius is a mere *acquisition,* for he hints at "infusing it," and making it a thing "heritable." A reversion which has been missed by the many respectable dunces who have been sons of men of genius.

is; that there is an identity of minds, and that there exists an interior conformity as marked and as perfect as the exterior physiognomy. A Scotch metaphysician has recently declared that "Locke or Newton might have been as eminent poets as Homer or Milton, had they given themselves early to the study of poetry." It is well to know how far this taste will go. We believe that had these philosophers obstinately, against nature, persisted in the attempt, as some have unluckily for themselves, we should have lost two great philosophers, and have obtained two supernumerary poets [1].

It would be more useful to discover another source of genius for philosophers and poets, less fallible than the gratuitous assumptions of these theorists. An adequate origin for peculiar qualities in the mind may be found in that constitutional or secret propensity which adapts some for particular pursuits, and forms the *predisposition* of genius.

Not that we are bound to demonstrate what our adversaries have failed in proving; we may still remain ignorant of the nature of genius, and yet be convinced that they have not revealed it. The phenomena of *predisposition* in the mind are not more obscure and ambiguous than those which have been assigned as the sources of genius in certain individuals. For is it more difficult to conceive that a person bears in his constitutional disposition a germ of native aptitude which is developing itself to a predominant character of genius, which breaks forth in the temperament and moulds the habits, than to conjecture that these men of genius could not have been such but from *accident*, or that they differ only in their *capacity*?

Every class of men of genius has distinct habits; all poets resemble one another, as all painters and all mathematicians. There is a conformity in the cast of their minds, and the quality of each is distinct from the other, and the very faculty which fits them for one particular pursuit, is just the reverse required for another. If these are truisms, as they may appear, we need not demonstrate that from which we only wish to draw our conclusion. Why does this remarkable similarity prevail through the classes of genius? Because each, in their favourite production, is working with the same appropriate organ. The poetical

[1] This very Scotch metaphysician, at the instant he lays down this postulate, acknowledges that "Dr. Beattie had talents for a *poet*, but apparently not for a *philosopher*." It is amusing to learn another result of his ungenial metaphysics. This sage demonstrates and concludes in these words, "It will therefore be found, with little exception, that a *great poet is but an ordinary genius*." Let this sturdy Scotch metaphysician never approach Pegasus—he has to fear, not his wings, but his heels. If some [illegible] on genius with a great deal too much, others have wri[illegible]

eye is early busied with imagery; as early will the reveries of the poetical mind be busied with the passions; as early will the painter's hand be copying forms and colours; as early will the young musician's ear wander in the creation of sounds, and the philosopher's head mature its meditations. It is then the aptitude of the appropriate organ, however it varies in its character, in which genius seems most concerned, and which is connatural and connate with the individual, and, as it was expressed in old days, is *born* with him. There seems no other source of genius; for whenever this has been refused by nature, as it is so often, no theory of genius, neither habit nor education, have ever supplied its want. To discriminate between the *habit* and the *predisposition* is quite impossible; because whenever great genius discovers itself, as it can only do by continuity, it has become a habit with the individual; it is the fatal notion of habit having the power of generating genius, which has so long served to delude the numerous votaries of mediocrity. Natural or native power is enlarged by art; but the most perfect art has but narrow limits, deprived of natural disposition.

A curious decision on this obscure subject may be drawn from an admirable judge of the nature of genius. AKENSIDE, in that fine poem which forms its history, tracing its source, sang,

> From Heaven my strains begin, from Heaven descends
> The flame of genius to *the human breast.*

But in the final revision of that poem, which he left many years after, the bard has vindicated the solitary and independent origin of genius, by the mysterious epithet,

"THE CHOSEN BREAST."

The veteran poet was, perhaps, schooled by the vicissitudes of his own poetical life, and those of some of his brothers.

Metaphors are but imperfect illustrations in metaphysical inquiries: usually they include too little or take in too much. Yet fanciful analogies are not willingly abandoned. The iconologists describe Genius as a winged child with a flame above its head; the wings and the flame express more than some metaphysical conclusions. Let me substitute for "the white paper" of Locke, which served the philosopher in his description of the operations of the senses on the mind, a less artificial substance. In the soils of the earth we may discover that variety of primary qualities which we believe to exist in human minds. The botanist and the geologist always find the nature of the strata indicative of its productions; the meagre light herbage announces the poverty of the soil it covers, while the luxuriant growth of plants

betrays the richness of the matrix in which the roots are fixed. It is scarcely reasoning by analogy to apply this operating principle of nature to the faculties of men.

But while the origin and nature of that faculty which we understand by the term Genius remain still wrapt up in its mysterious bud, may we not trace its history in its votaries? If Nature overshadow with her wings her first causes, still the effects lie open before us, and experience and observation will often deduce from consciousness what we cannot from demonstration. If Nature, in some of her great operations, has kept back her last secrets; if Newton, even in the result of his reasonings, has religiously abstained from penetrating into her occult connexions, is it nothing to be her historian, although we cannot be her legislator?

CHAPTER V.

Youth of genius.—Its first impulses may be illustrated by its subsequent actions.—Parents have another association of the man of genius than we.—Of genius, its first habits.—Its melancholy.—Its reveries.—Its love of solitude.—Its disposition to repose.—Of a youth distinguished by his equals.—Feebleness of its first attempts.—Of genius not discoverable even in manhood.—The education of the youth may not be that of his genius.—An unsettled impulse, querulous till it finds its true occupation.—With some, curiosity as intense a faculty as invention.—What the youth first applies to is commonly his delight afterwards.—Facts of the decisive character of genius.

We are entering into a fairy land, touching only shadows, and chasing the most changeable lights; many stories we shall hear, and many scenes will open on us; yet though realities are but dimly to be traced in this twilight of imagination and tradition, we think that the first impulses of genius may be often illustrated by the subsequent actions of the individual; and whenever we find these in perfect harmony, it will be difficult to convince us that there does not exist a secret connexion between those first impulses and these last actions.

Can we then trace in the faint lines of his youth an unsteady outline of the man? In the temperament of genius may we not reasonably look for certain indications or predispositions, announcing the permanent character? Is not great sensibility born with its irritable fibres? Will not the deep retired character cling to its musings? And the unalterable being of intrepidity and fortitude, will he not, commanding even amidst his sports, lead on his equals? The boyhood of Cato was marked by the sternness of the man, observable in his speech, his countenance, and his puerile amusements; and Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes,

GRAY, and others, betrayed the same early appearance of their intellectual vigour and precocity of character.

The virtuous and contemplative BOYLE imagined that he had discovered in childhood that disposition of mind which indicated an instinctive ingenuousness. An incident which he relates, evinced, as he thought, that even then he preferred to aggravate his fault rather than consent to suppress any part of the truth, an effort which had been unnatural to his mind. His fanciful, yet striking illustration may open our inquiry. "This trivial passage," the little story alluded to, "I have mentioned now, not that I think that in itself it deserves a relation, but because as the sun is seen best at his rising and his setting, so men's native dispositions are clearliest perceived whilst they are children, and when they are dying. These little sudden actions are the greatest discoverers of men's true humours."

ALFIERI, that historian of the literary mind, was conscious that even in his childhood the peculiarity and the melancholy of his character prevailed: a boyhood passed in domestic solitude, fed the interior feelings of his impassioned character; and in noticing some incidents of a childish nature, this man of genius observes, "Whoever will reflect on these inept circumstances, and explore into the seeds of the passions of man, possibly may find these neither so laughable nor so puerile as they may appear." His native genius, or by whatever other term we may describe it, betrayed the wayward predispositions of some of his poetical brothers: "Taciturn and placid for the most part, but at times loquacious and most vivacious, and usually in the most opposite extremes; stubborn and impatient against force, but most open to kindness, more restrained by the dread of reprimand than by anything else, susceptible of shame to excess, but inflexible if violently opposed." Such is the portrait of a child of seven years old, a portrait which induced the great tragic bard to deduce this result from his own self-experience, that "*man* is a continuation of the *child*[1]."

That the dispositions of genius in early life presage its future character, was long the feeling of antiquity. CICERO, in his Dialogue on Old Age, employs a beautiful analogy drawn from nature, marking her secret conformity in all things which have life and come from her hands; and the human mind is one of her plants.—"Youth is the vernal season of life, and the blossoms it then puts forth are indications of those future fruits which are to be gathered in the succeeding periods." One of the masters of the human mind, after much previous observa-

[1] See in his Life, chap. iv., entitled *Sviluppo dell' indole indicato da vari fattarelli*. "Development of genius, or natural inclination, indicated by various little matters."

tion of those who attended his lectures, would advise one to engage in political studies, then exhorted another to compose history, elected these to be poets, and those to be orators; for ISOCRATES believed that Nature had some concern in forming a man of genius, and endeavoured to guess at her secret by detecting the first energetic inclination of the mind. This also was the principle which guided the Jesuits, those other great masters in the art of education. They studied the characteristics of their pupils with such singular care, as to keep a secret register in their colleges, descriptive of their talents, and the natural turn of their dispositions. In some cases they guessed with remarkable felicity. They described Fontenelle, *adolescens omnibus numeris absolutus et inter discipulos princeps*, "a youth accomplished in every respect, and the model for his companions;" but when they describe the elder Crébillon, *puer ingeniosus sed insignis nebulo*, "a shrewd boy, but a great rascal," they might not have erred so much as they appear to have done; for an impetuous boyhood showed the decision of a character which might not have merely and misanthropically settled in imaginary scenes of horror, and the invention of characters of unparalleled atrocity.

In the old romance of King Arthur, when a cowherd comes to the king to request he would make his son a knight—"It is a great thing thou askest," said Arthur, who inquired whether this intreaty proceeded from him or his son. The old man's answer is remarkable—"Of my son, not of me; for I have thirteen sons, and all these will fall to that labour I put them; but this child will not labour for me, for anything that I and my wife will do; but always he will be shooting and casting darts, and glad for to see battles, and to behold knights, and always day and night he desireth of me to be made a knight." The king commanded the cowherd to fetch all his sons; "they were all shapen much like the poor man; but Tor was not like none of them in shape and in countenance, for he was much more than any of them. And so Arthur knighted him." This simple tale is the history of genius—the cowherd's twelve sons were like himself, but the unhappy genius in the family, who perplexed and plagued the cowherd and his wife and his twelve brothers, was the youth averse to the common labour, and dreaming of chivalry amidst a herd of cows.

A man of genius is thus dropped among the people, and has first to encounter the difficulties of ordinary men, unassisted by that feeble ductility which adapts itself to the common destination. Parents are too often the victims of the decided propensity of a son to a Virgil or a Euclid; and the first step into life of a man of genius is disobedience and grief. LILLY, our famous as-

trologer, has described the frequent situation of such a youth, like the cowherd's son who would be a knight. LILLY proposed to his father that he should try his fortune in the metropolis, where he expected that his learning and his talents would prove serviceable to him; the father, quite incapable of discovering the latent genius of his son in his studious dispositions, very willingly consented to get rid of him, for, as LILLY proceeds, "I could not work, drive the plough, or endure any country labour; my father oft would say I was *good for nothing*," —words which the fathers of so many men of genius have repeated.

In reading the memoirs of a man of genius, we often reprobate the domestic persecutions of those who opposed his inclinations. No poet but is moved with indignation at the recollection of the tutor at the Port-Royal thrice burning the romance which RACINE at length got by heart; no geometrician but bitterly inveighs against the father of PASCAL for not suffering him to study Euclid, which he at length understood without studying. The father of PETRARCH cast to the flames the poetical library of his son amidst the shrieks, the groans, and the tears of the youth. Yet this burnt-offering neither converted Petrarch into a sober lawyer, nor deprived him of the Roman laurel. The uncle of ALFIERI for more than twenty years suppressed the poetical character of this noble bard; he was a poet without knowing how to write a verse, and Nature, like a hard creditor, exacted, with redoubled interest, all the genius which the uncle had so long kept from her. These are the men whose inherent impulse no human opposition, and even no adverse education, can deter from proving them to be great men.

Let us, however, be just to the parents of a man of genius; they have another association of ideas respecting him than ourselves. We see a great man, they a disobedient child; we track him through his glory, they are wearied by the sullen resistance of one who is obscure and seems useless. The career of genius is rarely that of fortune or happiness; and the father, who himself may be not insensible to glory, dreads lest his son be found among that obscure multitude, that populace of mean artists, self-deluded yet self-dissatisfied, who must expire at the barriers of mediocrity.

If the youth of genius be struggling with a concealed impulse, he will often be thrown into a train of secret instruction which no master can impart. Hippocrates profoundly observed, that "our *natures* have not been taught us by any master." That faculty which the youth of genius displays in after-life, may exist long ere it is perceived; and it will only make its own what is homogeneous with itself. We may often observe how

the mind of this youth stubbornly rejects whatever is contrary to its habits, and alien to its affections. Of a solitary character, for solitariness is the wild nurse of his contemplations, he is fancifully described by one of the race — and here fancies are facts :

> " He is retired as noon-tide dew,
> Or fountain in a noon-day grove."

The romantic SIDNEY exclaimed, " Eagles fly alone, and they are but sheep which always herd together."

As yet this being, in the first rudiments of his sensations, is touched by rapid emotions, and disturbed by a vague restlessness; for him the images of nature are yet dim, and he feels before he thinks; for imagination precedes reflection. One truly inspired unfolds the secret story—

> " Endow'd with all that Nature can bestow,
> The child of fancy oft in silence bends
> O'er the mixt treasures of his pregnant breast
> With conscious pride. From thence he oft resolves
> To frame he knows not what excelling things;
> And win he knows not what sublime reward
> Of praise and wonder!"

But the solitude of the youth of genius has a local influence; it is full of his own creations of his unmarked passions and his uncertain thoughts. The titles which he gives his favourite haunts, often intimate the bent of his mind—its employment, or its purpose; as PETRARCH called his retreat *Linternum*, after that of his hero Scipio; and a young poet, from some favourite description in Cowley, called a spot he loved to muse in, " Cowley's Walk."

A temperament of this kind has been often mistaken for melancholy. " When the intermission of my studies allowed me leisure for recreation," says BOYLE, of his early life, " I would very often steal away from all company, and spend four or five hours alone in the fields, and think at random; making my delighted imagination the busy scene where some romance or other was daily acted." This circumstance alarmed his friends, who concluded that he was overcome with a growing melancholy. ALFIERI found himself in this precise situation, and experienced these undefinable emotions, when, in his first travels at Marseilles, his lonely spirit only haunted the theatre and the sea-shore; the tragic drama was then casting its influences over his unconscious genius. Almost every evening, after bathing in the sea, it delighted him to retreat to a little recess where the land jutted out; there would he sit, leaning his back against a high rock, which he tells us, " concealed from my sight every part of the land

behind me, while before and around me I beheld nothing but the sea and the heavens : the sun, sinking into the waves, was lighting up and embellishing these two immensities; there would I pass a delicious hour of fantastic ruminations, and there I should have composed many a poem, had I then known to write either in verse or prose in any language whatever."

An incident of this nature is revealed to us by the other noble and mighty spirit of our times, who could most truly exhibit the history of the youth of genius, and he has painted forth the enthusiasm of the boy TASSO :

" ———— From my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth;
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers
And rocks whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dream'd uncounted hours,
Though I was chid for wandering."

The youth of genius will be apt to retire from the active sports of his mates. BEATTIE paints himself in his own Minstrel :

" Concourse, and noise, and toil he ever fled,
Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray
Of squabbling imps; but to the forest sped."

BOSSUET would not join his young companions, and flew to his solitary task, while the classical boys avenged themselves by a schoolboy's villanous pun : stigmatising the studious application of *Bossuet* by the *bos suetus aratro* which frequent flogging had made them classical enough to quote.

The learned HUET has given an amusing detail of the inventive persecutions of his schoolmates, to divert him from his obstinate love of study. " At length, in order to indulge my own taste, I would rise with the sun, while they were buried in sleep, and hide myself in the woods, that I might read and study in quiet; " but they beat the bushes, and started in his burrow the future man of erudition. Sir WILLIAM JONES was rarely a partaker in the active sports of Harrow; it was said of GRAY that he was never a boy; the unhappy CHATTERTON and BURNS were singularly serious in youth ; as were HOBBES and BACON. MILTON has preserved for us, in solemn numbers, his school-life—

" When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing : all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good : myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things."

It is remarkable that this love of repose and musing is retained throughout life. A man of fine genius is rarely enamoured of common amusements or of robust exercises; and he is usually unadroit where dexterity of hand or eye, or trivial elegances, are required. This characteristic of genius was discovered by HORACE in that Ode which schoolboys often versify. BEATTIE has expressly told us of his Minstrel,

> "The exploit of strength, dexterity or speed
> To him nor vanity nor joy could bring."

ALFIERI said he could never be taught by a French dancing-master, whose art made him at once shudder and laugh. HORACE, by his own confession, was a very awkward rider, and the poet could not always secure a seat on his mule: METASTASIO humorously complains of his gun; the poetical sportsman could only frighten the hares and partridges; the truth was, as an elder poet sings,

> "Instead of hounds that make the wooded hills
> Talk in a hundred voices to the rills,
> I, like the pleasing cadence of a line,
> Struck by the concert of the sacred nine."

And we discover the true "humour" of the indolent contemplative race in their great representatives VIRGIL and HORACE. When they accompanied Mecænas into the country, while the minister amused himself at tennis, the two bards reposed on a vernal bank amidst the freshness of the shade. The younger Pliny, who was so perfect a literary character, was charmed by the Roman mode of hunting, or rather fowling by nets, which admitted him to sit a whole day with his tablets and stylus; so, says he, "should I return with empty nets, my tablets may at least be full." THOMSON was the hero of his own "Castle of Indolence;" and the elegant WALLER infuses into his luxurious verses the true feeling:

> "Oh, how I long my careless limbs to lay
> Under the plantane shade, and all the day
> Invoke the Muses and improve my vein."

The youth of genius, whom Beattie has drawn after himself, and I after observation, a poet of great genius, as I understand, had declared to be "too effeminate and timid, and too much troubled with delicate nerves. The *greatest poets* of all countries," he continues, "have been men eminently endowed with *bodily powers*, and rejoiced and excelled in all *manly exercises*." May not our critic of northern habits have often mis-

taken the art of the great poets in *describing* such "manly exercises or bodily powers," for the proof of their "rejoicing and excelling in them?" Poets and artists, from their habits, are not usually muscular and robust. Continuity of thought, absorving reverie, and sedentary habits, will not combine with corporeal skill and activity. There is also a constitutional delicacy which is too often the accompaniment of a fine intellect. The inconveniences attached to the inferior sedentary labourers are participated in by men of genius; the analogy is obvious, and their fate is common. Literary men may be included in Ramazzini's Treatise on the Diseases of Artisans. ROUSSEAU has described the labours of the closet as enervating men, and weakening the constitution, while study wears the whole machinery of man, exhausts the spirits, destroys his strength, and renders him pusillanimous[1]. But there is a higher principle which guides us to declare, that men of genius should not *excel* in "all manly exercises." SENECA, whose habits were completely literary, admonishes the man of letters that "Whatever amusement he chooses, he should not slowly return from those of the body to the mind, while he should be exercising the latter night and day." Seneca was aware that "to rejoice and excel in all manly exercises," would in some cases intrude into the habits of a literary man, and sometimes be even ridiculous. MORTIMER, once a celebrated artist, was tempted by his athletic frame to indulge in frequent violent exercises; and it is not without reason suspected, that habits so unfavourable to thought and study precluded that promising genius from attaining to the maturity of his talents, however he might have succeeded in invigorating his physical powers.

But to our solitude. So true is it that this love of loneliness is an early passion, that two men of genius of very opposite characters, the one a French wit and the other a French philosopher, have acknowledged that they have felt its influence, and even imagined that they had discovered its cause. The Abbé DE ST. PIERRE, in his political annals, tells us, "I remember to have heard old SEGRAIS remark, that most young people of both sexes had at one time of their lives, generally about seventeen or eighteen years of age, an inclination to retire from the world. He maintained this to be a species of melancholy, and humorously called it the small-pox of the mind, because scarce one in a thousand escaped the attack. I myself have had this distemper, but am not much marked with it."

But if the youth of genius be apt to retire from the ordinary sports of his mates, he will often substitute for them others,

[1] In the preface to the "Narcisse."

which are the reflections of those favourite studies which are haunting his young imagination, as men in their dreams repeat the conceptions which have habitually interested them. The amusements of such an idler have often been analogous to his later pursuits. ARIOSTO, while yet a schoolboy, seems to have been very susceptible of poetry, for he composed a sort of tragedy from the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, to be represented by his brothers and sisters, and at this time also delighted himself in translating the old French and Spanish romances. Sir WILLIAM JONES, at Harrow, divided the fields according to a map of Greece, and to each schoolfellow portioned out a dominion; and when wanting a copy of the Tempest to act from, he supplied it from his memory: we must confess that the boy Jones was reflecting in his amusements the cast of mind he displayed in his after-life, and evincing that felicity of memory and taste so prevalent in his literary character. FLORIAN'S earliest years, were passed in shooting birds all day, and reading every evening an old translation of the Iliad: whenever he got a bird remarkable for its size or its plumage, he personified it by one of the names of his heroes, and raising a funeral pyre, consumed the body: collecting the ashes in an urn, he presented them to his grandfather, with a narrative of his Patroclus or Sarpedon. We seem here to detect, reflected in his boyish sports, the pleasing genius of the author of Numa Pompilius, Gonsalvo of Cordova, and William Tell. BACON, when a child, was so remarkable for thoughtful observation, that Queen Elizabeth used to call him "the young lord-keeper." The boy made a remarkable reply, when her Majesty inquiring of him his age, he said, that "He was two years younger than her Majesty's happy reign." The boy may have been tutored; but this mixture of gravity and ingenuity and political courtiership, undoubtedly caught from his father's habits, afterwards characterised Lord Bacon's manhood. I once read the letter of a contemporary of HOBBES, where I found that this great philosopher, when a lad, used to ride on packs of skins to market, to sell them for his father, who was a fellmonger; and that in the market-place he thus early began to vent his private opinions, which long afterwards so fully appeared in his writings.

For a youth to be distinguished by his equals is perhaps a criterion of talent. At that moment of life, with no flattery on the one side, and no artifice on the other, all emotion and no reflection, the boy who has obtained a predominance has acquired this merely by native powers. The boyhood of NELSON was characterised by events congenial with those of his after-days; and his father understood his character when he declared that "in whatever station he might be placed, he would climb,

if possible, to the top of the tree." Some puerile anecdotes which FRANKLIN remembered of himself, betray the invention, and the firm intrepidity of his character, and even perhaps his carelessness of means to obtain a purpose. In boyhood he felt a desire for adventure; but as his father would not consent to a sea-life, he made the river near him represent the ocean : he lived on the water, and was the daring Columbus of a schoolboy's boat. A part where he and his mates stood to angle, in time became a quagmire : in the course of one day, the infant projector thought of a wharf for them to stand on and raised it with a heap of stones deposited there for the building of a house. With that sort of practical wisdom, or Ulyssean cunning, which marked his mature character, Franklin raised his wharf at the expense of another's house. His contrivances to aid his puny labourers, with his resolution not to quit the great work till it was effected, seem to strike out to us the invention and decision of his future character. But the qualities which would attract the companions of a schoolboy, may not be those which are essential to fine genius. The captain or leader of his schoolmates is not to be disregarded : but it is the sequestered boy who may chance to be the artist or the literary character. Some facts which have been recorded of men of genius at this period are remarkable. We are told by Miss Seward, that JOHNSON, when a boy at the free-school, appeared "a huge overgrown misshapen stripling;" but was considered as a stupendous stripling; "for even at that early period of life, Johnson maintained his opinions with the same sturdy dogmatical and arrogant fierceness." The puerile characters of Lord BOLINGBROKE and Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, schoolfellows and rivals, were observed to prevail through their after-life; the liveliness and brilliancy of Bolingbroke appeared in his attacks on Walpole, whose solid and industrious qualities triumphed by resistance. A parallel instance might be pointed out in two great statesmen of our own days; in the wisdom of the one, and the wit of the other, men whom nature made rivals, and time made friends or enemies, as it happened. A curious observer, in looking over a collection of the Cambridge poems, which were formerly composed by its students, has remarked, that "Cowley from the first was quaint, Milton sublime, and Barrow copious." If then the characteristic disposition may reveal itself thus early, it affords a principle which ought not to be neglected at this obscure period of youth.

Is there then a period in youth which yields decisive marks of the character of genius? The natures of men are as various as their fortunes. Some, like diamonds, must wait to receive their splendour from the slow touches of the polisher, while

others, resembling pearls, appear at once born with their beauteous lustre.

Among the inauspicious circumstances, is the feebleness of the first attempts; and we must not decide on the talents of a young man by his first works. DRYDEN and SWIFT might have been deterred from authorship, had their earliest pieces decided their fate. SMOLLETT, before he knew which way his genius would conduct him, had early conceived a high notion of his talents for dramatic poetry: his tragedy of "The Regicide" was refused by Garrick, whom for a long time he could not forgive, but continued to abuse our Roscius, through his works of genius, for having discountenanced his first work, which had none. RACINE's earliest composition, as we may judge by some fragments his son has preserved, remarkably contrast with his writings; for these fragments abound with those points and conceits which he afterwards abhorred. The tender author of Andromache could not have been discovered while exhausting himself in running after *concetti* as surprising as the worst parts of Cowley; in whose spirit alone he could have hit on this perplexing *concetto*, descriptive of Aurora: "Fille du Jour, qui nais devant ton père!"—"Daughter of Day, but born before thy father!" GIBBON betrayed none of the force and magnitude of his powers in his Essay on Literature," or his attempted "History of Switzerland." JOHNSON's cadenced prose is not recognisable in the humbler simplicity of his earliest years. Many authors have begun unsuccessfully the walk they afterwards excelled in. RAPHAEL, when he first drew his meagre forms under Perugino, had not yet conceived one line of that ideal beauty which one day he of all men could alone execute. Who could have imagined, in examining the *Dream* of Raphael, that the same pencil could hereafter have poured out the miraculous *Transfiguration*? Or that, in the imitative pupil of Hudson, our country was at length to pride herself on another Raphael?

Even the manhood of genius may pass unobserved by his companions, and, like Æneas, he may be hidden in a cloud amidst his associates. The celebrated FABIUS MAXIMUS in his boyhood was called in derision, "the little sheep," from the meekness and gravity of his disposition. His sedateness and taciturnity, his indifference to juvenile amusements, his slowness and difficulty in learning, and his ready submission to his equals, induced them to consider him as one irrecoverably stupid. The greatness of mind, unalterable courage, and invincible character, which FABIUS afterwards displayed, they then imagined had lain concealed under the apparent contrary qualities. The boy of genius may indeed seem slow and dull even to the phleg-

matic; for thoughtful and observing dispositions conceal themselves in timorous silent characters, who have not yet experienced their strength; and that assiduous love, which cannot tear itself away from the secret instruction it is perpetually imbibing, cannot be easily distinguished from the pertinacity of the mere plodder. We often hear, from the early companions of a man of genius, that at school he appeared heavy and unpromising. Rousseau imagined that the childhood of some men is accompanied by this seeming and deceitful dulness, which is the sign of a profound genius; and Roger Ascham has placed among "the best natures for learning, the sad-natured and hard-witted child;" that is, the thoughtful, or the melancholic, and the slow. The young painters, to ridicule the persevering labours of DOMENICHINO, which were at first heavy and unpromising, called him "the great ox;" and Passeri, while he has happily expressed the still labours of his concealed genius, *sua taciturna lentezza*, his silent slowness, expresses his surprise at the accounts he received of the early life of this great artist. "It is difficult to believe, what many assert, that, from the beginning, this great painter had a ruggedness about him which entirely incapacitated him from learning his profession; and they have heard from himself, that he quite despaired of success. Yet I cannot comprehend how such vivacious talents, with a mind so finely organised, and accompanied with such favourable dispositions for the art, would show such signs of utter incapacity; I rather think that it is a mistake in the proper knowledge of genius, which some imagine indicates itself most decisively by its sudden vehemence, showing itself like lightning, and like lightning passing away."

A parallel case we find in GOLDSMITH, who passed through an unpromising youth; he declared that he was never attached to literature till he was thirty; that poetry had no peculiar charms for him till that age[1]; and, indeed, to his latest hour he was surprising his friends by productions which they had imagined he was incapable of composing. HUME was considered, for his sobriety and assiduity, as competent to become a steady merchant; and it was said of BOILEAU that he had no great understanding, but would speak ill of no one. This circumstance of the character in youth being entirely mistaken, or entirely opposite to the subsequent one of mature life, has been noticed of many. Even a discerning parent or master has entirely failed to develop the genius of the youth, who has afterwards ranked among eminent men; we ought as little to decide from early

[1] This is a remarkable expression from Goldsmith: but it is much more so when we hear it from Lord Byron. See a note in the following chapter, on "The first Studies."

unfavourable appearances, as from inequality of talent. The great ISAAC BARROW's father used to say, that if it pleased God to take from him any of his children, he hoped it might be Isaac, as the least promising; and during the three years Barrow passed at the Charter-house, he was remarkable only for the utter negligence of his studies and of his person. The mother of SHERIDAN, herself a literary female, pronounced early that he was the dullest and most hopeless of her sons. BODMER, at the head of the literary class in Switzerland, who had so frequently discovered and animated the literary youths of his country, could never detect the latent genius of GESNER: after a repeated examination of the young man, he puts his parents in despair with the hopeless award that a mind of so ordinary a cast must confine itself to mere writing and accompts. One fact, however, Bodmer had overlooked when he pronounced the fate of our poet and artist—the dull youth, who could not retain barren words, discovered an active fancy in the images of things. While at his grammar lessons, as it happened to Lucian, he was employing tedious hours in modelling in wax, groups of men, animals, and other figures, the rod of the pedagogue often interrupted the fingers of our infant moulder, who never ceased working to amuse his little sisters, with his waxen creatures, which constituted all his happiness. Those arts of imitation were already possessing the soul of the boy GESNER, to which afterwards it became so entirely devoted.

Thus it happens that in the first years of life the education of the youth may not be the education of his genius; he lives unknown to himself and others. In all these cases nature had dropped the seeds in the soil: but even a happy disposition must be concealed amidst adverse circumstances: I repeat that genius can only make that its own, which is homogeneous with its nature. It has happened to some men of genius during a long period of their lives, that an unsettled impulse, unable to discover the object of its aptitude, a thirst and fever in the temperament of too sentient a being, which cannot find the occupation to which only it can attach itself, has sunk into a melancholy and querulous spirit, weary with the burthen of existence; but the instant the latent talent had declared itself, his first work, the eager offspring of desire and love, has astonished the world at once with the birth and the maturity of genius.

We are told that PELLEGRINO TIBALDI, who afterwards obtained the glorious title of "the reformed Michael Angelo," long felt the strongest internal dissatisfaction at his own proficiency, and that one day, in melancholy and despair, he had retired from the city, resolved to starve himself to death: his friend discovered him, and having persuaded him to change

his pursuits from painting to architecture, he soon rose to eminence. This story D'Argenville throws some doubt over; but as Tibaldi during twenty years abstained from his pencil, a singular circumstance seems explained by an extraordinary occurrence. TASSO with feverish anxiety pondered on five different subjects before he could decide in the choice of his epic; the same embarrassment was long the fate of GIBBON on the subject of his History. Some have sunk into a deplorable state of utter languishment, from the circumstance of being deprived of the means of pursuing their beloved study, as in the case of the chemist BERGMAN. His friends, to gain him over to the more lucrative profession, deprived him of his books of natural history; a plan which nearly proved fatal to the youth, who with declining health quitted the university. At length ceasing to struggle with the conflicting desire within him, his renewed enthusiasm for his favourite science restored the health he had lost in abandoning it.

It was the view of the tomb of Virgil which so powerfully influenced the innate genius of BOCCACCIO, and fixed his instant decision. As yet young, and in the neighbourhood of Naples, wandering for recreation, he reached the tomb of the Mantuan. Pausing before it, his youthful mind began to meditate. Struck by the universal glory of that great name, he lamented his own fortune to be occupied by the obscure details of merchandise; already he sighed to emulate the fame of the Roman, and as Villani tells us, from that day he abandoned for ever the occupations of commerce, dedicating himself to literature. PROCTOR, the lost Phidias of our country, would often say, that he should never have quitted his mercantile situation, but for the accidental sight of Barry's picture of Venus rising from the sea; a picture which produced so immediate an effect on his mind, that it determined him to quit a lucrative occupation. Surely we cannot account for such sudden effusions of the mind, and such instant decisions, but by the principle of that predisposition which only waits for an occasion to declare itself.

Abundant facts exhibit genius unequivocally discovering itself in youth. In general, perhaps, a master-mind exhibits precocity. "Whatever a young man at first applies himself to, is commonly his delight afterwards." This remark was made by HARTLEY, who has related an anecdote of the infancy of his genius, which indicated the manhood. He declared to his daughter that the intention of writing a book upon the nature of man, was conceived in his mind when he was a very little boy—when swinging backwards and forwards upon a gate, not more than nine or ten years old; he was then meditating upon the nature of his own mind, how man was made, and for what future end.

Such was the true origin, in a boy of ten years old, of his celebrated book on "The Frame, the Duty, and the Expectation of Man." JOHN HUNTER conceived his notion of the principle of life, which to his last day formed the subject of his inquiries and experiments, when he was very young; for at that period of life, Mr. Abernethy tells us, he began his observations on the incubated egg, which suggested or corroborated his opinions.

A learned friend, and an observer of men of science, has supplied me with a remark highly deserving notice. It is an observation that will generally hold good, that the most important systems of theory, however late they may be published, have been formed at a very early period of life. This important observation may be verified by some striking facts. A most curious one will be found in Lord BACON'S letter to Father Fulgentio, where he gives an account of his projecting his philosophy thirty years before, during his youth. MILTON from early youth mused on the composition of an Epic. DE THOU has himself told us, that from his tender youth his mind was full of the idea of composing a history of his own times; and his whole life was passed in preparation, and in a continued accession of materials for a future period. From the age of twenty, MONTESQUIEU was preparing the materials of *L'Esprit des Lois*, by extracts from the immense volumes of civil law. TILLEMONT'S vast labours were traced out in his mind at the early age of nineteen, on reading Baronius; and some of the finest passages in RACINE'S tragedies were composed while a pupil, wandering in the woods of the Port-Royal. So true is it that the seeds of many of our great literary and scientific works were lying, for many years antecedent to their being given to the world, in a latent state of germination [1].

The predisposition of genius has declared itself in painters and poets, who were such before they understood the nature of colours and the arts of verse, and this vehement propensity, so mysteriously constitutional, may be traced in other intellectual characters besides those which belong to the class of imagination.

[1] I need not to be reminded, that I am not worth mentioning among the illustrious men who have long formed the familiar subjects of my delightful researches. But with the middling as well as with the great, the same habits must operate. Early in life, I was struck by the inductive philosophy of Bacon, and sought after a Moral Experimental Philosophy; and I had then in my mind an observation of Lord Bolingbroke's, for I see I quoted it thirty years ago, that "Abstract or general propositions, though never so true, appear obscure or doubtful to us very often till they are explained by examples." So far back as in 1793, I published "A Dissertation on Anecdotes," with the simplicity of a young votary; there I deduced results, and threw out a magnificent project not very practicable. From that time to the hour I am now writing, my metal has been running in this mould, and I still keep casting philosophy into anecdotes, and anecdotes into philosophy. As I began I fear I shall end.

It was said that PITT was *born* a minister; the late Dr. SHAW I always considered as one *born* a naturalist, and I know a great literary antiquary who seems to me to have been also *born* such; for the passion of *curiosity* is as intense a faculty, or instinct, with some casts of mind, as is that of *invention* with poets and painters: I confess that to me it is *genius* in a form in which genius has not yet been suspected to appear. One of the biographers of Sir HANS SLOANE expresses himself in this manner: "Our author's *thirst* for knowledge seems to have been *born* with him; so that his *Cabinet of Rarities* may be said to have commenced with *his being*." This strange metaphorical style has only confused an obscure truth. SLOANE early in life felt an irresistible impulse which inspired him with the most enlarged views of the productions of nature, and he exulted in their accomplishment; for in his will he has solemnly recorded, that his collections were the fruits of his early devotion; *having had from my youth a strong inclination to the study of plants and all other productions of nature.* The vehement passion of PEIRESC for knowledge, according to accounts which Gassendi received from old men who had known him as a child, broke out as soon as he had been taught his alphabet; for then his delight was to be handling books and papers and his perpetual inquiries after their contents obliged them to invent something to quiet the child's insatiable curiosity, who was hurt when told that he had not the capacity to understand them. He did not study as an ordinary scholar, for he never read but with perpetual researches. At ten years of age, his passion for the studies of antiquity was kindled at the sight of some ancient coins dug up in his neighbourhood; then, that vehement passion for knowledge "began to burn like fire in a forest," as Gassendi happily describes the fervour and amplitude of the mind of this man of vast learning. Bayle, who was an experienced judge in the history of genius, observes on two friars, one of whom was haunted by a strong disposition to *genealogical,* and the other to *geographical* pursuits, that "let a man do what he will, if nature incline us to certain things, there is no preventing the gratification of our desire, though it lies hid under a monk's frock." It is not, therefore, as the world is apt to imagine, only poets and painters for whom is reserved this restless and impetuous propensity for their particular pursuits; I claim it for the man of science as well as for the man of imagination.—And I confess, that I consider this strong bent of the mind in men, eminent in pursuits in which imagination is little concerned, and whom men of genius have chosen to remove so far from their class, as another gifted aptitude. They too, share in the glorious fever of genius, and we feel how just

was the expression formerly used, of "their *thirst* for knowledge."

But to return to the men of genius who answer more strictly to the popular notion of inventors. We have BOCCACCIO's own words for a proof of his early natural tendency to tale-writing, in a passage of his genealogy of the Gods: "Before seven years of age, when as yet I had met with no stories, was without a master, and hardly knew my letters, I had a natural talent for fiction, and produced some little tales." Thus the *Decamerone* was appearing much earlier than we suppose. DESCARTES, while yet a boy, indulged such habits of deep meditation, that he was nicknamed by his companions. "The Philosopher," always questioning, and ever settling the cause and the effect. He was twenty-five years of age before he left the army, but the propensity for meditation had been early formed; and he has himself given an account of the pursuits which occupied his youth, and of the progress of his genius; of the secret struggle which he so long maintained with his own mind, wandering in concealment over the world for more than twenty years, and, as he says of himself, like the statuary labouring to draw out a Minerva from the marble block. MICHAEL ANGELO, as yet a child, wherever he went, busied himself in drawing; and when his noble parents, hurt that a man of genius was disturbing the line of their ancestry, forced hin to relinquish the pencil, the infant artist flew to the chisel: the art which was in his soul would not allow of idle hands. LOPE DE VEGA, VELASQUEZ, ARIOSTO, and TASSO, are all said to have betrayed at their school-tasks the most marked indications of their subsequent characteristics.

This decision of the impulse of genius is apparent in MURILLO. This young artist was undistinguished at the place of his birth. A brother artist returning home from London, where he had studied under Van Dyk, surprised MURILLO by a chaste, and to him hitherto unknown, manner. Instantly he conceived the project of quitting his native Seville and flying to Italy—the fever of genius broke forth with all its restlessness. But he was destitute of the most ordinary means to pursue a journey, and forced to an expedient, he purchased a piece of canvas, which, dividing into parts, he painted on each, figures of saints, landscapes, and flowers; an humble merchandise of art adapted to the taste and devout feelings of the times, and which were readily sold to the adventurers to the Indies. With these small means he departed, having communicated his project to no one except to a beloved sister, whose tears could not prevail to keep the lad at home; the impetuous impulse had blinded him to the perils and the impracticability of his wild project. He reached

Madrid, where the great VELASQUEZ, his countryman, was struck by the ingenuous simplicity of the youth, who urgently requested letters for Rome; but when that noble genius understood the purport of this romantic journey, VELASQUEZ assured him that he need not proceed to Italy to learn the art he loved. The great master opened the royal galleries to the youth, and cherished his studies. MURILLO returned to his native city, where from his obscurity he had never been missed, having ever lived a retired life of silent labour; but this painter of nature returned to make the city which had not noticed his absence the theatre of his glory.

The same imperious impulse drove CALLOT, at the age of twelve years, from his father's roof. His parents, from prejudices of birth, had conceived that the art of engraving was one beneath the studies of their son; but the boy had listened to stories of the miracles of Italian art, and with a curiosity predominant over any self-consideration, one morning the genius flew away. Many days had not elapsed, when finding himself in the utmost distress, with a gang of gipsies he arrived at Florence. A merchant of Nancy discovered him, and returned the reluctant boy of genius to his home. Again he flies to Italy, and again his brother discovers him, and reconducts him to his parents. The father, whose patience and forgiveness were now exhausted, permitted his son to become the most original genius of French art; one who, in his vivacious groups, the touch of his graver, and the natural expression of his figures, anticipated the creations of Hogarth.

Facts of this decisive character are abundant. See the boy NANTEUIL hiding himself in a tree to pursue the delightful exercise of his pencil, while his parents are averse to their son practising his young art! See HANDEL, intended for a doctor of the civil laws, and whom no parental discouragement could deprive of his enthusiasm, for ever touching harpsichords, and having secretly conveyed a musical instrument to a retired apartment, listen to him when, sitting through the night, he awakens his harmonious spirit! Observe FERGUSON, the child of a peasant, acquiring the art of reading without any one suspecting it, by listening to his father teaching his brother; observe him making a wooden watch without the slightest knowledge of mechanism; and while a shepherd, studying, like an ancient Chaldean, the phenomena of the heavens, on a celestial globe formed by his own hand. That great mechanic, SMEATON, when a child, disdained the ordinary playthings of his age; he collected the tools of workmen, observed them at their work, and asked questions till he could work himself. One day, having watched some millwrights, the child was shortly after, to the

distress of the family, discovered in a situation of extreme danger, fixing up at the top of a barn a rude windmill. Many circumstances of this nature occurred before his sixth year. His father, an attorney, sent him up to London to be brought up to the same profession; but he declared that "the study of the law did not suit the *bent of his genius;*" a term he frequently used. He addressed a strong memorial to his father, to show his utter incompetency to study law; and the good sense of the father abandoned Smeaton "to the bent of his genius in his own way." Such is the history of the man who raised the Eddystone lighthouse, in the midst of the waves, like the rock on which it stands.

Can we hesitate to believe, that in such minds there was a resistless and mysterious propensity, "growing with the growth" of these youths, who seem to have been placed out of the influence of that casual excitement, or any other of those sources of genius, so frequently assigned for its production?

Yet these cases are not more striking than one related of the Abbé La Caille, who ranked among the first astronomers of the age. La Caille was the son of the parish clerk of a village. At the age of ten years his father sent him every evening to ring the church bell, but the boy always returned home late: his father was angry, and beat him, and still the boy returned an hour after he had rung the bell. The father, suspecting something mysterious in his conduct, one evening watched him. He saw his son ascend the steeple, ring the bell as usual, and remain there during an hour. When the unlucky boy descended, he trembled like one caught in the fact, and on his knees confessed that the pleasure he took in watching the stars from the steeple was the real cause which detained him from home. As the father was not born to be an astronomer, he flogged his son severely. The youth was found weeping in the streets by a man of science, who, when he discovered in a boy of ten years of age a passion for contemplating the stars at night, and one too, who had discovered an observatory in a steeple, decided that the seal of nature had impressed itself on the genius of that boy. Relieving the parent from the son, and the son from the parent, he assisted the young La Caille in his passionate pursuit, and the event completely justified the prediction. How children feel a predisposition for the studies of astronomy, or mechanics, or architecture, or natural history, is that secret in nature we have not guessed. There may be a virgin thought as well as a virgin habit—nature before education—which first opens the mind, and ever afterwards is shaping its tender folds. Accidents may occur to call it forth, but thousands of youths have found them-

selves in parallel situations with SMEATON, FERGUSON, and LA CAILLE, without experiencing their energies.

The case of CLAIRON, the great French tragic actress, who seems to have been an actress before she saw a theatre, deserves attention. This female, destined to be a sublime tragedian, was of the lowest extraction; the daughter of a violent and illiterate woman, who with blows and menaces was driving about the child all day to manual labour. "I know not," says Clairon, "whence I derive my disgust, but I could not bear the idea to be a mere workwoman, or to remain inactive in a corner." In her eleventh year, being locked up in a room as a punishment, with the windows fastened, she climbed upon a chair to look about her. A new object instantly absorbed her attention. In the house opposite she observed a celebrated actress amidst her family; her daughter was performing her dancing lesson: the girl Clairon, the future Melpomene, was struck by the influence of this graceful and affectionate scene. "All my little being collected itself into my eyes; I lost not a single motion; as soon as the lesson ended, all the family applauded, and the mother embraced the daughter. The difference of her fate and mine filled me with profound grief; my tears hindered me from seeing any longer, and when the palpitations of my heart allowed me to re-ascend the chair, all had disappeared." This scene was a discovery; from that moment Clairon knew no rest, and rejoiced when she could get her mother to confine her in that room. The happy girl was a divinity to the unhappy one, whose susceptible genius imitated her in every gesture and every motion; and Clairon soon showed the effect of her ardent studies. She betrayed in the common intercourse of life, all the graces she had taught herself; she charmed her friends, and even softened her barbarous mother; in a word, the enthusiastic girl was an actress without knowing what an actress was.

In this case of the youth of genius, are we to conclude that the accidental view of a young actress practising her studies imparted the character of Clairon? Could a mere chance occurrence have given birth to those faculties which produced a sublime tragedian? In all arts there are talents which may be acquired by imitation and reflection,—and thus far may genius be educated; but there are others which are entirely the result of native sensibility, which often secretly torment the possessor, and which may even be lost from the want of development, dissolved into a state of languor from which many have not recovered. Clairon, before she saw the young actress, and having yet no conception of a theatre, for she had never entered one, had in her soul that latent faculty which creates a dramatic genius. "Had I not felt like Dido",

she once exclaimed, "I could not have thus personified her!"

The force of impressions received in the warm susceptibility of the childhood of genius, is probably little known to us; but we may perceive them also working in the *moral character*, which frequently discovers itself in childhood, and which manhood cannot always conceal, however it may alter. The intellectual and the moral character are unquestionably closely allied. ERASMUS acquaints us, that Sir THOMAS MORE had something ludicrous in his aspect, tending to a smile,—a feature which his portraits preserve; and that he was more inclined to pleasantry and jesting, than to the gravity of the chancellor. This circumstance he imputes to Sir Thomas More "being from a child so delighted with humour, that he seemed to be even born for it." And we know that he died as he had lived, with a jest on his lips. The hero, who came at length to regret that he had but one world to conquer, betrayed the majesty of his restless genius when but a youth. Had Aristotle been nigh, when, solicited to join in the course, the princely boy replied, that "He would run in no career where kings were not the competitors," the prescient tutor might have recognised in his pupil the future and successful rival of Darius and Porus.

A narrative of the earliest years of Prince Henry, by one of his attendants, forms an authentic collection of juvenile anecdotes, which made me feel very forcibly, that there are some children who deserve to have a biographer at their side; but anecdotes of children are the rarest of biographies, and I deemed it a singular piece of good fortune to have recovered such a remarkable evidence of the precocity of character[1]. Professor Dugald Stewart has noticed a fact in ARNAULD'S infancy, which, considered in connexion with his subsequent life, affords a good illustration of the force of impressions received in the first dawn of reason. ARNAULD, who, to his eightieth year, passed through a life of theological controversy, when a child, amusing himself in the library of the Cardinal Du Perron, requested to have a pen given to him: "For what purpose?" inquired the cardinal. "To write books, like you, against the Huguenots." The cardinal, then aged and infirm, could not conceal his joy at the prospect of so hopeful a successor; and placing the pen in his hand, said, "I give it you as the dying shepherd, Damœtas, bequeathed his pipe to the little Corydon." Other children might have asked for a pen —but to write against the Huguenots evinced a deeper feel-

[1] I have preserved this manuscript narrative in 'Curiosities of Literature.'

ing and a wider association of ideas, indicating the future polemic.

Some of these facts, we conceive, afford decisive evidence of that instinct in genius, that primary quality of mind, sometimes called organisation, which has inflamed a war of words by an equivocal term. We repeat that this faculty of genius can exist independent of education, and where it is wanting, education can never confer it: it is an impulse, an instinct always working in the character of "the chosen mind;"

> "One with our feelings and our powers,
> And rather part of us, than ours."

In the history of genius there are unquestionably many secondary causes of considerable influence in developing, or even crushing the germ—these have been of late often detected, and sometimes carried to a ridiculous extreme; but among them none seem more remarkable than the first studies and the first habits.

CHAPTER VI.

The first studies.—The self-educated are marked by stubborn peculiarities.—Their errors.—Their improvement from the neglect or contempt they incur.—The history of self-education in Moses Mendelssohn.—Friends usually prejudicial in the youth of genius.—A remarkable interview between Petrarch in his first studies, and his literary adviser.—Exhortation.

THE first studies form an epoch in the history of genius, and unquestionably have sensibly influenced its productions. Often have the first impressions stamped a character on the mind adapted to receive one, as the first step into life has often determined its walk. But this, for ourselves, is a far distant period in our existence, which is lost in the horizon of our own recollections, and is usually unobserved by others.

Many of those peculiarities of men of genius which are not fortunate, and some which have hardened the character in its mould, may, however, be traced to this period. Physicians tell us that there is a certain point in youth at which the constitution is formed, and on which the sanity of life revolves; the character of genius experiences a similar dangerous period. Early bad tastes, early peculiar habits, early defective instructions, all the egotistical pride of an untamed intellect, are those evil spirits which will dog genius to its grave. An early attachment to the works of Sir Thomas Browne produced in JOHNSON an excessive admiration of that Latinised English,

which violated the native graces of the language; and the peculiar style of Gibbon is traced by himself "to the constant habit of speaking one language, and writing another." The first studies of REMBRANDT affected his after-labours. The peculiarity of shadow which marks all his pictures originated, in the circumstance of his father's mill receiving light from an aperture at the top, which habituated the artist afterwards to view all objects as if seen in that magical light. The intellectual POUSSIN, as Nicholas has been called, could never, from an early devotion to the fine statues of antiquity, extricate his genius on the canvas from the hard forms of marble: he sculptured with his pencil; and that cold austerity of tone, still more remarkable in his last pictures, as it became mannered, chills the spectator on a first glance. When POPE was a child, he found in his mother's closet a small library of mystical devotion; but it was not suspected, till the fact was discovered, that the effusions of love and religion poured forth in his Eloisa, were caught from the seraphic raptures of those erotic mystics, who to the last retained a place in his library among the classical bards of antiquity. The accidental perusal of Quintus Curtius first made BOYLE, to use his own words, "in love with other than pedantic books, and conjured up in him an unsatisfied appetite of knowledge; so that he thought he owed more to Quintus Curtius than did Alexander." From the perusal of Rycaut's folio of Turkish history in childhood, the noble and impassioned bard of our times retained those indelible impressions which gave life and motion to the "Giaour," "the Corsair," and "Alp." A voyage to the country produced the scenery. Rycaut only communicated the impulse to a mind susceptible of the poetical character; and without this Turkish history we should still have had the poet [1].

[1] The following manuscript note, by Lord Byron on this passage, cannot fail to interest the lovers of poetry, as well as the inquirer into the history of the human mind. His lordship's recollections of his first readings will not alter the tendency of my conjecture; it only proves that he had read much more of Eastern history and manners than Rycaut's folio, which probably led to this class of books.

"Knolles—Cantemir—De Tott – Lady M. W. Montagu—Hawkins's translation from Mignot's History of the Turks—the Arabian Nights—All travels or histories or books upon the East I could meet with, I had read, as well as Rycaut, before I was *ten years old*. I think the Arabian Nights first. After these I preferred the history of naval actions, Don Quixote, and Smollett's novels, particularly Roderick Random, and I was passionate for the Roman History.

"When a boy I could never bear to read any Poetry whatever without disgust and reluctance."—*MS. note by Lord Byron.* Latterly Lord Byron acknowledged in a conversation held in Greece with Count Gamba, not long before he died, "The Turkish History was one of the first books that gave me pleasure when a child; and I believe it had much influence on my subsequent wishes to

The influence of first studies, in the formation of the character of genius, is a moral phenomenon, which has not sufficiently attracted our notice. FRANKLIN acquaints us, that when young and wanting books, he accidentally found De Foe's "Essay on Projects," from which work impressions were derived which afterwards influenced some of the principal events of his life. The lectures of REYNOLDS probably originated in the essays of Richardson. It is acknowledged that these first made him a painter, and not long afterwards an author; and it is said that many of the principles in his lectures may be traced in those first studies. Many were the indelible and glowing impressions caught by the ardent Reynolds from those bewildering pages of enthusiasm! Sir WALTER RAWLEIGH, according to a family tradition, when a young man, was perpetually reading and conversing on the discoveries of Columbus, and the conquests of Cortez and Pizarro. His character, as well as the great events of his life, seem to have been inspired by his favourite histories; to pass beyond the discoveries of the Spaniards became a passion, and the vision of his life. It is formally testified, that from a copy of Vegetius *de Re Militari,* in the school library of St. Paul's, MARLBOROUGH imbibed his passion for a military life. If he could not understand the text, the prints were, in such a mind, sufficient to awaken the passion for military glory. ROUSSEAU in early youth, full of his Plutarch, while he was also devouring the trash of romances, could only conceive human nature in the colossal forms, or be affected by the infirm sensibility of an imagination mastering all his faculties; thinking like a Roman, and feeling like a Sybarite. The same circumstance happened to CATHERINE MACAULEY, who herself has told us how she owed the bent of her character to the early reading of the Roman historians; but combining Roman admiration with English faction, she violated truth in English characters, and exaggerated romance in her Roman. But the permanent effect of solitary bias in the youth of genius, impelling the whole current of his after-life, is strikingly displayed in the remarkable character of Archdeacon BLACKBURNE, the author of the famous "Confessional," and the curious "Memoirs of Hollis," written with such a republican fierceness.

I had long considered the character of our archdeacon as a *lusus politicus et theologicus.* Having subscribed to the Ar-

visit the Levant; and gave perhaps the Oriental colouring which is observed in my poetry."

I omitted the following note in the last Edition, but I shall now preserve it, as it may enter into the history of his Lordship's character.

"When I was in Turkey I was oftener tempted to turn Mussulman than poet, and have often regretted since that I did not. 1818."

ticles, and enjoying the archdeaconry, he was writing against subscription and the whole hierarchy, with a spirit so irascible and caustic, that one would have suspected that, like Prynne and Bastwick, the archdeacon had already lost both his ears; while his antipathy to monarchy might have done honour to a Roundhead of the Rota Club. The secret of these volcanic explosions was only revealed in a letter accidentally preserved. In the youth of our spirited archdeacon, when fox-hunting was his deepest study, it happened at the house of a relation, that on a rainy day he fell, among other garret lumber, on some worm-eaten volumes which had once been the careful collections of his great-grandfather, an Oliverian justice. "These," says he, "I conveyed to my lodging-room, and there became acquainted with the manners and principles of many excellent old Puritans, and then laid the foundation of my own." The enigma is now solved! Archdeacon BLACKBURNE, in his seclusion in Yorkshire amidst the Oliverian justice's library, shows that we are in want of a Cervantes but not of a Quixote, and Yorkshire might yet be as renowned a country as La Mancha; for political romances, it is presumed, may be as fertile of ridicule as any of the folios of chivalry.

We may thus mark the influence through life of those first unobserved impressions on the character of genius, which every author has not recorded.

Education, however indispensable in a cultivated age, produces nothing on the side of genius. Where education ends genius often begins. GRAY was asked if he recollected when he first felt the strong predilection to poetry; he replied, that "he believed it was when he began to read Virgil for his own amusement, and not in school hours as a task." Such is the force of self-education in genius, that the celebrated physiologist, JOHN HUNTER, who was entirely self-educated, evinced such penetration in his anatomical discoveries, that he has brought into notice passages from writers he was unable to read, and which had been overlooked by profound scholars [1].

That the education of genius must be its own work, we may appeal to every one of the family. It is not always fortunate, for many die amidst a waste of talents and the wreck of mind.

> Many a soul sublime
> Has felt the influence of malignant star.

An unfavourable position in society is a usual obstruction in the course of this self-education; and a man of genius, through

[1] Life of John Hunter, by Dr. Adams. p. 59, where the case is curiously illustrated.

half his life, has held a contest with a bad, or with no education. There is a race of the late-taught, who, with a capacity of leading in the first rank, are mortified to discover themselves only on a level with their contemporaries. WINKELMANN, who passed his youth in obscure misery as a village schoolmaster, paints feelings which strikingly contrast with his avocations. "I formerly filled the office of a schoolmaster with the greatest punctuality; and I taught the A, B, C, to children with filthy heads, at the moment I was aspiring after the knowledge of the beautiful, and meditating, low to myself, on the similes of Homer; then I said to myself, as I still say, 'Peace, my soul, thy strength shall surmount thy cares.'" The obstructions of so unhappy a self-education essentially injured his ardent genius, and long he secretly sorrowed at this want of early patronage, and these habits of life so discordant with the habits of his mind. "I am unfortunately one of those whom the Greeks named ὀψιμαθεῖς, *sero sapientes*, the late-learned, for I have appeared too late in the world and in Italy. To have done something, it was necessary that I should have had an education analogous to my pursuits, and at your age." This class of the *late-learned* is a useful distinction. It is so with a sister-art; one of the greatest musicians of our country assures me, that the ear is as latent with many; there are the late-learned even in the musical world. BUDÆUS declared that he was both "self-taught and late-taught."

The SELF-EDUCATED are marked by stubborn peculiarities. Often abounding with talent, but rarely with talent in its place, their native prodigality has to dread a plethora of genius and a delirium of wit; or else, hard but irregular students rich in acquisition, they find how their huddled knowledge, like corn heaped in a granary, for want of ventilation and stirring, perishes in its own masses. Not having attended to the process of their own minds, and little acquainted with that of other men, they cannot throw out their intractable knowledge, nor with sympathy awaken by its softening touches the thoughts of others. To conduct their native impulse, which had all along driven them, is a secret not always discovered, or else discovered late in life. Hence it has happened with some of this race, that their first work has not announced genius, and their last is stamped with it. Some are often judged by their first work, and when they have surpassed themselves, it is long ere it is acknowledged. They have improved themselves by the very neglect or even contempt which their unfortunate efforts were doomed to meet; and when once they have learned what is beautiful, they discover a living but unsuspected source in their own wild but unregarded originality. Glorying in their strength at the time that they are betraying their weakness, yet are they still mighty in that enthu-

siasm which is only disciplined by its own fierce habits. Never can the native faculty of genius with its creative warmth be crushed out of the human soul; it will work itself out beneath the encumbrance of the most uncultivated minds, even amidst the deep perplexed feelings and the tumultuous thoughts of the most visionary enthusiast, who is often only a man of genius misplaced [1]. We may find a whole race of these self-taught among the unknown writers of the old romances, and the ancient ballads of European nations; there sleep many a Homer and Virgil—legitimate heirs of their genius though possessors of decayed estates. BUNYAN is the Spenser of the people. The fire burned towards Heaven, although the altar was rude and rustic.

BARRY, the painter, has left behind him works not to be turned over by the connoisseur by rote, nor the artist who dares not be just. That enthusiast, with a temper of mind resembling Rousseau's, but with coarser feelings, was the same creature of untamed imagination consumed by the same passions, with the same fine intellect disordered, and the same fortitude of soul; but he found his self-taught pen, like his pencil, betray his genius. A vehement enthusiasm breaks through his ill-composed works, throwing the sparks of his bold conceptions into the soul of the youth of genius. When, in his character of professor, he delivered his lectures at the academy, at every pause his auditors rose in a tumult, and at every close their hands returned to him the proud feelings he adored. This gifted but self-educated man, once listening to the children of genius whom he had created about him, exclaimed, "Go it, go it, my boys! they did so at Athens." This self-formed genius could throw up his native mud into the very heaven of his invention!

But even such pages as those of BARRY'S are the aliment of young genius. Before we can discern the beautiful, must we not be endowed with the susceptibility of love? Must not the disposition be formed before even the object appears? I have witnessed the young artist of genius glow and start over the reveries of the uneducated BARRY, but pause and meditate, and inquire over the mature elegance of REYNOLDS; in the one he caught the passion for beauty, and in the other he discovered the beautiful; with the one he was warm and restless, and with the other calm and satisfied.

Of the difficulties overcome in the self-education of genius,

[1] "One assertion I will venture to make, as suggested by my own experience, that there exists folios on the human understanding and the nature of man which would have a far juster claim to their high rank and celebrity, if in the whole huge volume there could be found as much fulness of heart and intellect as burst forth in many a simple page of George Fox and Jacob Behmen."—Mr. Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, i, 143.

we have a remarkable instance in the character of MOSES MENDELSSOHN, on whom literary Germany has bestowed the honourable title of the Jewish Socrates[1]." So great apparently were the invincible obstructions which barred out Mendelssohn from the world of literature and philosophy, that, in the history of men of genius, it is something like taking in the history of man, the savage of Aveyron from his woods,—who, destitute of a human language, should at length create a model of eloquence; who, without the faculty of conceiving a figure, should at length be capable of adding to the demonstrations of Euclid; and who, without a complex idea and with few sensations, should at length, in the sublimest strain of metaphysics, open to the world a new view of the immortality of the soul!

Mendelssohn, the son of a poor rabbin, in a village in Germany, received an education completely rabbinical, and its nature must be comprehended, or the term of *education* would be misunderstood. The Israelites in Poland and Germany live with all the restrictions of their ceremonial law in an insulated state, and are not always instructed in the language of the country of their birth. They employ for their common intercourse a barbarous or *patois* Hebrew; while the sole studies of the young rabbins are strictly confined to the Talmud, of which the fundamental principle, like the Sonna of the Turks, is a pious rejection of every species of profane learning. This ancient jealous spirit, which walls in the understanding and the faith of man, was to shut out what the imitative Catholics afterwards called heresy. It is, then, these numerous folios of the Talmud which the true Hebraic student contemplates through all the seasons of life, as the Patuecos in their low valley imagine their surrounding mountains to be the confines of the universe.

Of such a nature was the plan of MENDELSSOHN'S first studies; but even in his boyhood this conflict of study occasioned an agitation of his spirits, which affected his life ever after. Rejecting the Talmudical dreamers, he caught a nobler spirit from the celebrated Maimonides; and his native sagacity was already clearing up the surrounding darkness. An enemy not less hostile to the enlargement of mind than voluminous legends, presented itself in the indigence of his father, who was com-

[1] I composed the life of MENDELSSOHN so far back as in 1798, in a periodical publication, whence our late biographers have drawn their notices; a juvenile production, which happened to excite the attention of the late BARRY, then not personally known to me; and he gave all the immortality his poetical pencil could bestow on this man of genius, by immediately placing in his Elysium of Genius, MENDELSSOHN shaking hands with ADDISON, who wrote on the truth of the Christian religion, and near LOCKE, the English master of MENDELSSOHN'S mind.

pelled to send away the youth on foot to Berlin, to find labour and bread.

At Berlin, Mendelssohn becomes an amanuensis to another poor rabbin, who could only still initiate him into the theology, the jurisprudence, and the scholastic philosophy of his people. Thus, he was as yet no farther advanced in that philosophy of the mind in which he was one day to be the rival of Plato and Locke, nor in that knowledge of literature which was finally to place him among the first polished critics of Germany.

Some unexpected event occurs which gives the first great impulse to the mind of genius. MENDELSSOHN received this from the companion of his misery and his studies, a man of congenial but maturer powers. He was a Polish Jew, expelled from the communion of the orthodox, and the calumniated student was now a vagrant, with more sensibility than fortitude. But this vagrant was a philosopher, a poet, a naturalist, and a mathematician. MENDELSSOHN, at a distant day, never alluded to him without tears. Thrown together into the same situation, they approached each other by the same sympathies, and communicating in the only language which MENDELSSOHN could speak, the Polander voluntarily undertook his literary education.

Then was seen one of the most extraordinary spectacles in the history of modern literature. Two houseless Hebrew youths might be discovered, in the moonlit streets of Berlin, sitting in retired corners, or on the steps of some porch, the one instructing the other, with a Euclid in his hand; but what is more extraordinary, it was a Hebrew version, composed by the master for a pupil who knew no other language. Who could then have imagined that the future Plato of Germany was sitting on those steps!

The Polander, whose deep melancholy had settled on his heart, died—yet he had not lived in vain, since the electric spark that lighted up the soul of MENDELSSOHN had fallen from his own.

MENDELSSOHN was now left alone; his mind teeming with its chaos, and still master of no other language than that barren idiom which was incapable of expressing the ideas he was meditating on. He had scarcely made a step into the philosophy of his age, and the genius of MENDELSSOHN had probably been lost to Germany, had not the singularity of his studies and the cast of his mind been detected by the sagacity of Dr. Kisch. The aid of this physician was momentous; for he devoted several hours every day to the instruction of a poor youth, whose strong capacity he had the discernment to perceive, and the generous temper to aid. MENDELSSOHN was soon enabled to read Locke in a Latin version; but with such extreme pain,

that, compelled to search for every word, and to arrange their Latin order, and at the same time to combine metaphysical ideas, it was observed that he did not so much translate, as guess by the force of meditation.

This prodigious effort of his intellect retarded his progress, but invigorated his habit, as the racer, by running against the hill, at length courses with facility.

A succeeding effort was to master the living languages, and chiefly the English, that he might read his favourite Locke in his own idiom. Thus a great genius for metaphysics and languages was forming itself alone, without aid.

It is curious to detect, in the character of genius, the effects of local and moral influences. There resulted from MENDELSSOHN'S early situation, certain defects in his Jewish education, and numerous impediments in his studies. Inheriting but one language, too obsolete and naked to serve the purposes of modern philosophy, he perhaps overvalued his new acquisitions, and in his delight of knowing many languages, he with difficulty escaped from remaining a mere philologist; while in his philosophy, having adopted the prevailing principles of Wolf and Baumgarten, his genius was long without the courage or the skill to emancipate itself from their rusty chains. It was more than a step which had brought him into their circle, but a step was yet wanting to escape from it.

At length the mind of MENDELSSOHN enlarged in literary intercourse: he became a great and original thinker in many beautiful speculations in moral and critical philosophy; while he had gradually been creating a style which the critics of Germany have declared to be their first luminous model of precision and elegance. Thus a Hebrew vagrant, first perplexed in the voluminous labyrinth of Judaical learning, in his middle age oppressed by indigence and malady, and in his mature life wrestling with that commercial station whence he derived his humble independence, became one of the master-writers in the literature of his country. The history of the mind of MENDELSSOHN is one of the noblest pictures of the self-education of genius.

Friends, whose prudential counsels in the business of life are valuable in our youth, are usually prejudicial in the youth of genius. The multitude of authors and artists originates in the ignorant admiration of their early friends; while the real genius has often been disconcerted and thrown into despair, by the false judgments of his domestic circle. The productions of taste are more unfortunate than those which depend on a chain of reasoning, or the detail of facts; these are more palpable to the common judgments of men; but taste is of such rarity, that a long life may be passed by some without once obtaining a fami-

liar acquaintance with a mind so cultivated by knowledge, so tried by experience, and so practised by converse with the literary world, that its prophetic feeling can anticipate the public opinion. When a young writer's first essay is shown, some, through mere inability of censure, see nothing but beauties; others, from mere imbecility, can see none; and others, out of pure malice, see nothing but faults. "I was soon disgusted," says GIBBON, "with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends some will praise for politeness, and some will criticise for vanity." Had several of our first writers set their fortunes on the cast of their friends' opinions, we might have lost some precious compositions. The friends of THOMSON discovered nothing but faults in his early productions, one of which happened to be his noblest, the "Winter;" they just could discern that these abounded with luxuriances, without being aware that they were the luxuriances of a poet. He had created a new school in art—and appealed from his circle to the public. From a manuscript letter of our poet's, written when employed on his "Summer," I transcribe his sentiments on his former literary friends in Scotland—he is writing to Mallet: "Far from defending these two lines, I damn them to the lowest depth of the poetical Tophet, prepared of old, for Mitchell, Morrice, Rook, Cook, Beckingham, and a long etc. Wherever I have evidence, or think I have evidence, which is the same thing, I'll be as obstinate as all the mules in Persia." This poet of warm affections felt so irritably the perverse criticisms of his learned friends, that they were to share alike, a poetic Hell—probably a sort of Dunciad, or Lampoons. One of these "blasts" broke out in a vindictive epigram on Mitchell, whom he describes with a "blasted eye;" but this critic literally having one, the poet, to avoid a personal reflection, could only consent to make the blemish more active—

> "Why all not faults, injurious Mitchell! why
> Appears one beauty to thy *blasting* eye?"

He again calls him "the planet-blasted Mitchell." Of another of these critical friends he speaks with more sedateness, but with a strong conviction that the critic, a very sensible man, had no sympathy with the poet. "Aikman's reflections on my writings are very good, but he does not in them regard the turn of my genius enough; should I alter my way, I would write poorly. I must choose what appears to me the most significant epithet, or I cannot, with any heart, proceed." The "Mirror," when periodically published in Edinburgh, was "fastidiously" received, as all "home-productions" are; but London avenged the cause of the author. When SWIFT introduced PARNELL to Lord Boling-

broke, and to the world, he observes, in his Journal, "it is pleasant to see one who hardly passed for anything in Ireland, make his way here with little friendly forwarding." MONTAIGNE has honestly told us, that in his own province, they considered that for him to attempt to become an author was perfectly ludicrous: at home, says he, "I am compelled to purchase printers; while at a distance, printers purchase me." There is nothing more trying to the judgment of the friends of a young man of genius, than the invention of a new manner: without a standard to appeal to, without bladders to swim, the ordinary critic sinks into irretrievable distress; but usually pronounces against novelty. When REYNOLDS returned from Italy, warm with all the excellence of his art, and painted a portrait, his old master Hudson viewing it, and perceiving no trace of his own manner, exclaimed that he did not paint so well as when he left England; while another, who conceived no higher excellence than Kneller, treated with signal contempt the future Raphael of England.

If it be dangerous for a young writer to resign himself to the opinions of his friends, he also incurs some peril in passing them with inattention. He wants a Quintilian. One mode to obtain such an invaluable critic, is the cultivation of his own judgment in a round of reading and meditation. Let him at once supply the marble and be himself the sculptor: let the great authors of the world be his gospels, and the best critics their expounders; from the one he will draw inspiration, and from the others he will supply those tardy discoveries in art, which he who solely depends on his own experience may obtain too late. Those who do not read criticism will rarely merit to be criticised; their progress is like those who travel without a map of the country. The more extensive an author's knowledge of what has been done, the greater will be his powers in knowing what to do. To obtain originality, and effect discovery, sometimes requires but a single step, if we only know from what point to set forwards. This important event in the life of genius has too often depended on chance and good fortune, and many have gone down to their graves without having discovered their unsuspected talent. CURRAN'S predominant faculty was an exuberance of imagination when excited by passion; but when young he gave no evidence of this peculiar faculty, nor for several years, while a candidate for public distinction, was he aware of his particular powers; so slowly his imagination had developed itself. It was, when assured of the secret of his strength, that his confidence, his ambition, and his industry were excited.

Let the youth preserve his juvenile compositions, whatever these may be; they are the spontaneous growth, and like the plants of the Alps not always found in other soils; they are his

virgin fancies. By contemplating them he may detect some of his predominant habits,—resume a former manner more happily,—invent novelty from an old subject he had rudely designed,—and often may steal from himself some inventive touches, which, thrown into his most finished compositions, may seem a happiness rather than an art. It was in contemplating on some of their earliest and unfinished productions, that more than one artist discovered with WEST, that "there were inventive touches of art in his first and juvenile essay, which, with all his subsequent knowledge and experience, he had not been able to surpass." A young writer in the progress of his studies, should often recollect a fanciful simile of Dryden:

> "As those who unripe veins in mines explore,
> On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
> Till time digests the yet imperfect ore;
> And know it will be gold another day."

The youth of genius is that "age of admiration" as sings the poet of "Human Life," when the spell breathed into our ear by our genius, fortunate or unfortunate, is—"Aspire!" Then we adore art, and the artists. It was RICHARDSON'S enthusiasm which gave REYNOLDS the raptures he caught in meditating on the description of a great painter: and REYNOLDS thought RAPHAEL the most extraordinary man the world had ever produced. WEST, when a youth, exclaimed, that "A painter is a companion for kings and emperors!" This was the feeling which rendered the thoughts of obscurity painful and insupportable to their young minds.

But this sunshine of rapture is not always spread over the spring of the youthful year. There is a season of self-contest, a period of tremors, and doubts, and darkness. These frequent returns of melancholy, sometimes of despondence, which is the lot of inexperienced genius, is a secret history of the heart, which has been finely conveyed to us by Petrarch, in a conversation with John of Florence, to whom the young poet often resorted when dejected, to reanimate his failing powers, to confess his faults, and to confide to him his dark and wavering resolves. It was a question with Petrarch, whether he should not turn away from the pursuit of literary fame, by giving another direction to his life.

"I went one day to John of Florence in one of those ague-fits of faint-heartedness which often happened to me: he received me with his accustomed kindness. 'What ails you?' said he, 'you seem oppressed with thought: if I am not deceived, something has happened to you.'—'You do not deceive yourself, my father (for thus I used to call him), and yet nothing newly

has happened to me; but I come to confide to you that my old melancholy torments me more than usual. You know its nature, for my heart has always been opened to you; you know all which I have done to draw myself out of the crowd, and to acquire a name; and surely not without some success, since I have your testimony in my favour. Are you not the truest man, and the best of critics, who have never ceased to bestow on me your praise,—and what need I more? Have you not often told me that I am answerable to God for the talents he has endowed me with, if I neglected to cultivate them? Your praises were to me as a sharp spur: I applied myself to study with more ardour, insatiable even of my moments. Disdaining the beaten paths, I opened a new road; and I flattered myself that assiduous labour would lead to something great; but I know not how, when I thought myself highest, I feel myself fallen; the spring of my mind has dried up; what seemed easy once, now appears to me above my strength; I stumble at every step, and am ready to sink for ever into despair. I return to you to teach me, or at least advise me. Shall I for ever quit my studies? Shall I strike into some new course of life? My father, have pity on me! draw me out of the frightful state in which I am lost.' I could proceed no farther without shedding tears. 'Cease to afflict yourself, my son,' said that good man; 'your condition is not so bad as you think: the truth is, you knew little at the time you imagined you knew much. The discovery of your ignorance is the first great step you have made towards true knowledge. The veil is lifted up, and you now view those deep shades of the soul which were concealed from you by excessive presumption. In ascending an elevated spot, we gradually discover many things whose existence before was not suspect by us. Persevere in the career which you entered with my advice; feel confident that God will not abandon you: there are maladies which the patient does not perceive; but to be aware of the disease, is the first step towards the cure.'"

This remarkable literary interview is here given, that it may perchance meet the eye of some kindred youth at one of those lonely moments when a Shakespeare may have thought himself no poet, and a Raphael believed himself no painter. Then may the tender wisdom of a John of Florence, in the cloudy despondency of art, lighten up the vision of its glory!

Ingenuous Youth! if, in a constant perusal of the master-writers, you see your own sentiments anticipated, if in the tumult of your mind, as it comes in contact with theirs, new sentiments arise; if, sometimes, looking on the public favourite of the hour, you feel that within which prompts you to imagine that you could rival or surpass him; if, in meditating on the confessions of

every man of genius, for they all have their confessions, you find you have experienced the same sensations from the same circumstances, encountered the same difficulties and overcome them by the same means,—then let not your courage be lost in your admiration,—but listen to that "still small voice" in your heart which cries with CORREGGIO and with MONTESQUIEU, "Ed io anche son pittore!"

CHAPTER VII.

Of the irritability of genius.—Genius in society often in a state of suffering.—Equality of temper more prevalent among men of letters.—Of the occupation of making a great name.—Anxieties of the most successful.—Of the inventors.—Writers of learning.—Writers of taste.—Artists.

THE modes of life of a man of genius, often tinctured by eccentricity and enthusiasm, maintain an eternal conflict with the monotonous and imitative habits of society, as society is carried on in a great metropolis, where men are necessarily alike, and where, in perpetual intercourse, they shape themselves to one another.

The occupations, the amusements, and the ardour of the man of genius, are at discord with the artificial habits of life: in the vortexes of business, or the world of pleasure, crowds of human beings are only treading in one another's steps. The pleasures and the sorrows of this active multitude are not his, while his are not obvious to them; and his favourite occupations strengthen his peculiarities, and increase his sensibility. Genius in society is often in a state of suffering. Professional characters, who are themselves so often literary, yielding to their predominant interests, conform to that assumed urbanity which levels them with ordinary minds; but the man of genius cannot leave himself behind in the cabinet he quits; the train of his thoughts is not stopped at will, and in the range of conversation the habits of his mind will prevail: the poet will sometimes muse till he modulates a verse; the artist is sketching what a moment presents, and a moment changes; the philosophical historian is suddenly absorbed by a new combination of thought, and, placing his hands over his eyes, is thrown back into the middle ages. Thus it happens that an excited imagination, a high-toned feeling, a wandering reverie, a restlessness of temper, are perpetually carrying the man of genius out of the processional line of the mere conversationists. Like all solitary beings, he is much too sentient, and prepares for defence even at a random touch or a chance hit. His generalising views take things only

in masses, while in his rapid emotions he interrogates, and doubts, and is caustic; in a word, he thinks he converses, while he is at his studies. Sometimes, apparently a complacent listener, we are mortified by detecting the absent man: now he appears humbled and spiritless, ruminating over some failure which probably may be only known to himself; and now haughty and hardy for a triumph he has obtained, which yet remains a secret to the world. No man is so apt to indulge the extremes of the most opposite feelings: he is sometimes insolent, and sometimes querulous; now the soul of tenderness and tranquillity, view him stung by jealousy, or writhing in aversion! A fever shakes his spirit; a fever which has sometimes generated a disease, and has even produced a slight perturbation of the faculties[1]. In one of those manuscript notes by Lord BYRON on this work, which I have wished to preserve, I find his lordship observing on the feelings of genius, that "the depreciation of the lowest of mankind is more painful than the applause of the highest is pleasing." Such is the confession of genius, and such its liability to hourly pain.

Once we were nearly receiving from the hand of genius the most curious sketches of the temper, the irascible humours, the delicacy of soul, even to its shadowiness, from the warm *sbozzos* of BURNS, when he began a diary of the heart,—a narrative of characters and events, and a chronology of his emotions. It was natural for such a creature of sensation and passion to project such a regular task, but quite impossible for him to get through it. The paper-book that he conceived would have recorded all these things, turns out, therefore, but a very imperfect document. Imperfect as it was, it has been thought proper not to give it entire. Yet there we view a warm original mind, when he first stepped into the polished circles of society, discovering that he could no longer "pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very immost soul, with unreserved con-

[1] I have given a history of *literary quarrels from personal motives*, in Quarrels of Authors, afterwards. There we find how many controversies, in which the public get involved, have sprung from some sudden squabble, some neglect of petty civility, some unlucky epithet, or some casual observation dropped without much consideration, which mortified or enraged the *genus irritabile*; a title which from ancient days has been assigned to every description of authors. The late Dr. WELLS, who had some experience in his intercourse with many literary characters, observed, that "in whatever regards the fruits of their mental labours, this is universally acknowledged to be true. Some of the malevolent passions indeed frequently become in learned men more than ordinarily strong, from want of that restraint upon their excitement which society imposes." A puerile critic has reproached me for having drawn my description entirely from my own fancy:—I have taken it from life! See further symptoms of this disease at the close of the chapter on *Self-praise* in the present work.

fidence to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repenting his confidence." This was the first lesson he learned at Edinburgh, and it was as a substitute for such a human being that he bought a paper-book to keep under lock and key: "a security at least equal," says he, "to the bosom of any friend whatever." Let the man of genius pause over the fragments of this "paper-book;" it will instruct as much as any open confession of a criminal at the moment he is about to suffer. No man was more afflicted with that miserable pride, the infirmity of men of imagination, which is so jealously alive, even among their best friends, as to exact a perpetual acknowledgment of their powers. Our poet, with all his gratitude and veneration for "the noble Glencairn," was "wounded to the soul" because his lordship showed "so much attention, engrossing attention, to the only blockhead at table; the whole company consisted of his lordship, Dunderpate, and myself." This Dunderpate, who dined with Lord Glencairn, might have been a useful citizen, who, in some points, is of more value than an irritable bard. Burns was equally offended with another patron, who was also a literary brother, Dr. Blair. At the moment, he too appeared to be neglecting the irritable poet "for the mere carcass of greatness, or when his eye measured the difference of their point of elevation; I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion," (he might have added, except a good deal of painful contempt,) "what do I care for him or his pomp either?"—"Dr. Blair's vanity is proverbially known among his acquaintance," adds Burns, at the moment that the solitary haughtiness of his own genius had entirely escaped his self observation.

This character of genius is not singular. Grimm tells of MARIVAUX, that though a good man, there was something dark and suspicious in his character, which made it difficult to keep on terms with him; the most innocent word would wound him, and he was always inclined to think that there was an intention to mortify him; this disposition made him unhappy, and rendered his acquaintance too painful to endure.

What a moral paradox, but what an unquestionable fact, is the wayward irritability of some of the finest geniuses, which is often weak to effeminacy, and capricious to childishness! while minds of a less delicate texture are not frayed and fretted by casual frictions; and plain sense with a coarser grain, is sufficient to keep down these aberrations of their feelings. How mortifying is the list of—

"Fears of the brave and follies of the wise!"

Many have been sore and implacable on an allusion to some personal defect—on the obscurity of their birth—on some peculiarity of habit; and have suffered themselves to be governed in life by nervous whims and chimeras, equally fantastic and trivial. This morbid sensibility lurks in the temperament of genius, and the infection is often discovered where it is not always suspected. Cumberland declared that the sensibility of some men of genius is so quick and captious, that you must first consider whom they can be happy with, before you can promise yourself any happiness with them: if you bring uncongenial humours into contact with each other, all the objects of society will be frustrated by inattention to the proper grouping of the guests. Look round on our contemporaries; every day furnishes facts which confirm our principle. Among the vexations of POPE was the libel of "the pictured shape;" and even the robust mind of JOHNSON could not suffer to be exhibited as "blinking Sam." MILTON must have delighted in contemplating his own person; and the engraver not having reached our sublime bard's ideal grace, he has pointed his indignation in four iambics. The praise of a skipping ape raised the feeling of envy in that child of nature and genius, GOLDSMITH. VOITURE, the son of a vintner, like our PRIOR, was so mortified whenever reminded of his original occupation, that it was bitterly said, that wine, which cheered the hearts of all men, sickened the heart of Voiture. AKENSIDE ever considered his lameness as an unsupportable misfortune, for it continually reminded him of the fall of the cleaver from one of his father's blocks. BECCARIA, invited to Paris by the literati, arrived melancholy and silent—and abruptly returned home. At that moment this great man was most miserable from a fit of jealousy: a young female had extinguished all his philosophy. The poet ROUSSEAU was the son of a cobbler; and when his honest parent waited at the door of the theatre to embrace his son on the success of his first piece, genius, whose sensibility is not always virtuous, repulsed the venerable father with insult and contempt. But I will no longer proceed from folly to crime!

Those who give so many sensations to others must themselves possess an excess and a variety of feelings. We find, indeed, that they are censured for their extreme irritability; and that happy equality of temper so prevalent among MEN OF LETTERS, and which is conveniently acquired by men of the world, has been usually refused to great mental powers, or to fervid dispositions—authors and artists. The man of wit becomes petulant, the profound thinker morose, and the vivacious ridiculously thoughtless.

When ROUSSEAU once retired to a village, he had to learn to

endure its conversation; for this purpose he was compelled to invent an expedient to get rid of his uneasy sensations. "Alone, I have never known ennui, even when perfectly unoccupied; my imagination, filling the void, was sufficient to busy me. It is only the inactive chit-chat of the room, when every one is seated face to face, and only moving their tongues, which I never could support. There to be a fixture, nailed with one hand on the other, to settle the state of the weather, or watch the flies about one, or, what is worse, to be bandying compliments, this to me is not bearable." He hit on the expedient of making lace-strings, carrying his working cushion in his visits, to keep the peace with the country gossips.

Is the occupation of making a great name less anxious and precarious than that of making a great fortune? the progress of a man's capital is unequivocal to him, but that of the fame of authors and artists is for the greater part of their lives of an ambiguous nature. They become whatever the minds or knowledge of others make them; they are the creatures of the prejudices and the predispositions of others, and must suffer from those precipitate judgments which are the result of such prejudices and such predispositions. Time only is the certain friend of literary worth, for time makes the world disagree among themselves; and when those who condemn discover that there are others who approve, the weaker party loses itself in the stronger, and at length they learn, that the author was far more reasonable than their prejudices had allowed them to conceive. It is thus, however, that the regard which men of genius find in one place they lose in another. We may often smile at the local gradations of genius; the fervid esteem in which an author is held here, and the cold indifference, if not contempt, he encounters in another place; here the man of learning is condemned as a heavy drone, and there the man of wit annoys the unwitty listener.

And are not the anxieties of even the most successful men of genius renewed at every work—often quitted in despair, often returned to with rapture? the same agitation of the spirits, the same poignant delight, the same weariness, the same dissatisfaction, the same querulous languishment after excellence? Is the man of genius an INVENTOR? the discovery is contested, or it is not comprehended for ten years after, perhaps not during his whole life; even men of science are as children before him. Sir Thomas Bodley wrote to Lord Bacon, remonstrating with him on his *new mode of philosophising*. It seems the fate of all originality of thinking to be immediately opposed; a contemporary is not prepared for its comprehension, and too often cautiously avoids it, from the prudential motive which turns away

from a new and solitary path. BACON was not at all understood at home in his own day; his reputation—for it was not celebrity—was confined to his history of Henry VII., and his Essays; it was long after his death before English writers ventured to quote Bacon as an authority; and with equal simplicity and grandeur, BACON called himself "the servant of posterity." MONTESQUIEU gave his *Esprit des Lois* to be read by that man in France, whom he conceived to be the best judge, and in return received the most mortifying remarks. The great philosopher exclaimed in despair, "I see my own age is not ripe enough to understand my work; however, it shall be published!" When KEPLER published the first rational work on comets, it was condemned, even by the learned, as a wild dream. COPERNICUS so much dreaded the prejudice of mankind against his treatise on "The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies," that, by a species of continence of all others most difficult to a philosopher, says Adam Smith, he detained it in his closet for thirty years together. LINNÆUS once in despair abandoned his beloved studies, from a too irritable feeling of the ridicule in which, as it appeared to him, a professor Siegesbeck had involved his famous system. Penury, neglect, and labour, LINNÆUS could endure, but that his botany should become the object of ridicule for all Stockholm, shook the nerves of this great inventor in his science. Let him speak for himself. "No one cared how many sleepless nights and toilsome hours I had passed, while all with one voice declared, that Siegesbeck had annihilated me. I took my leave of Flora, who bestows nothing on me but Siegesbecks; and condemned my too numerous observations a thousand times over to eternal oblivion. What a fool have I been to waste so much time, to spend my days in a study which yields no better fruit, and makes me the laughing-stock of the world." Such are the cries of the irritability of genius, and such are often the causes. The world was in danger of losing a new science, had not LINNÆUS returned to the discoveries which he had forsaken in the madness of the mind! The great SYDENHAM, who like our HARVEY and our HUNTER, effected a revolution in the science of medicine, and led on alone by the independence of his genius attacked the most prevailing prejudices, so highly provoked the malignant emulation of his rivals, that a conspiracy was raised against the father of our modern practice to banish him out of the college, as "guilty of medical heresy." JOHN HUNTER was a great discoverer in his own science; but one who well knew him has told us, that few of his contemporaries perceived the ultimate object of his pursuits; and his strong and solitary genius laboured to perfect his designs without the solace of sympathy, without one cheering approbation. "We bees do

not provide honey for ourselves," exclaimed VAN HELMONT, when worn out by the toils of chemistry, and still contemplating, amidst tribulation and persecution, and approaching death, his "Tree of Life," which he imagined he had discovered in the cedar. But with a sublime melancholy, his spirit breaks out: "My mind breathes some unheard-of thing within; though I, as unprofitable for this life, shall be buried!" Such were the mighty but indistinct anticipations of this visionary inventor, the father of modern chemistry!

I cannot quit this short record of the fates of the inventors in science, without adverting to another cause of that irritability of genius which is so closely connected with their pursuits. If we look into the history of theories, we shall be surprised at the vast number which have "not left a rack behind." And do we suppose that the inventors themselves were not at times alarmed by secret doubts of their soundness and stability? They felt, too often for their repose, that the noble architecture which they had raised might be built on moveable sands, and be found only in the dust of libraries; a cloudy day, or a fit of indigestion, would deprive an inventor of his theory all at once; and as one of them said, "after dinner, all that I have written in the morning appears to me dark, incongruous, nonsensical." At such moments we should find this man of genius in no pleasant mood. The true cause of this nervous state cannot, nay, must not, be confided to the world; the honour of his darling theory will always be dearer to his pride than the confession of even slight doubts which may shake its truth. It is a curious fact which we have but recently discovered, that ROUSSEAU was disturbed by a terror he experienced, and which we well know was not unfounded, that his theories of education were false and absurd. He could not endure to read a page in his own Emile[1] without disgust after the work had been published! He acknowledged that there were more suffrages against his notions than for them. "I am not displeased," says he, "with myself on the style and eloquence, but I still dread that my writings are good for nothing at the bottom, and that all my theories are full of extravagance.—*Je crains toujours que je pèche par le fond, et que tous mes systèmes ne sont que des extravagances.*" HARTLEY with his "Vibrations and vibratiuncules," LEIBNITZ with his "Monads," CUDWORTH with his "Plastic Natures," MALEBRANCHE with his paradoxical doctrine of "Seeing all things in God," and BURNET with his heretical "Theory of the Earth," must unquestionably at times

[1] In a letter by Hume to Blair, written in 1766, apparently first published in the Literary Gazette, Nov. 17, 1821.

have betrayed an irritability which those about them may have attributed to temper, rather than to genius.

Is our man of genius—not the victim of fancy, but the slave of truth—a learned author? Of the living waters of human knowledge it cannot be said that "If a man drink thereof, he shall never thirst again." What volumes remain to open! what manuscript but makes his heart palpitate! There is no term in researches which new facts may not alter, and a single date may not dissolve. Truth! thou fascinating, but severe mistress, thy adorers are often broken down in thy servitude, performing a thousand unregarded task-works! Now winding thee through thy labyrinth with a single thread, often unravelling—now feeling their way in darkness, doubtful if it be thyself they are touching. How much of the real labour of genius and erudition must remain concealed from the world, and never be reached by their penetration! MONTESQUIEU has described this feeling after its agony: "I thought I should have killed myself these three months to finish a *morceau* (for his great work), which I wished to insert, on the origin and revolutions of the civil laws in France. You will read it in three hours; but I do assure you that it cost me so much labour that it has whitened my hair." Mr. Hallam, stopping to admire the genius of GIBBON, exclaims, "In this, as in many other places, the masterly boldness and precision of his outline, which astonish those who have trodden parts of the same field, is apt to escape an uninformed reader." Thrice has my learned friend, SHARON TURNER, recomposed, with renewed researches, the history of our ancestors, of which Milton and Hume had despaired—thrice, amidst the self-contests of ill-health and professional duties!

The man of erudition in closing his elaborate work is still exposed to the fatal omissions of wearied vigilance, or the accidental knowledge of some inferior mind, and always to the reigning taste, whatever it chance to be, of the public. BURNET criticised VARILLAS unsparingly; but when he wrote history himself, Harmer's "Specimen of Errors in Burnet's History," returned Burnet the pangs which he had inflicted on another. NEWTON'S favourite work was his "Chronology," which he had written over fifteen times, yet he desisted from its publication during his life-time, from the ill-usage of which he complained. Even the "Optics" of Newton had no character at home till noticed in France. The calm temper of our great philosopher was of so fearful a nature in regard to criticism, that Whiston declares that he would not publish his attack on the Chronology, lest it might have killed our philosopher; and thus Bishop STILLINGFLEET'S end was hastened by LOCKE'S confutation of his metaphysics. The feelings of Sir JOHN MARSHAM

could hardly be less irritable when he found his great work tainted by an accusation that it was not friendly to revelation. When the learned POCOCK published a specimen of his translation of Abulpharagius, an Arabian historian, in 1649, it excited great interest; but in 1663, when he gave the world the complete version, it met with no encouragement: in the course of those thirteen years, the genius of the times had changed, and Oriental studies were no longer in request.

The great VERULAM profoundly felt the retardment of his fame; for he has pathetically expressed this sentiment in his testament, where he bequeaths his name to posterity, AFTER SOME GENERATIONS SHALL BE PAST. BRUCE sunk into his grave defrauded of that just fame which his pride and vivacity perhaps too keenly prized, at least for his happiness, and which he authoritatively exacted from an unwilling public. Mortified and indignant at the reception of his great labour by the cold-hearted scepticism of little minds, and the maliciousness of idling wits, he whose fortitude had toiled through a life of difficulty and danger, could not endure the laugh and scorn of public opinion; for BRUCE there was a simoon more dreadful than the Arabian, and from which genius cannot hide its head. Yet BRUCE only met with the fate which MARCO POLO had before encountered; whose faithful narrative had been condemned by his contemporaries, and who was long thrown aside among legendary writers.

HARVEY, though his life was prolonged to his eightieth year, hardly lived to see his great discovery of the circulation of the blood established: no physician adopted it; and when at length it was received, one party attempted to rob Harvey of the honour of the discovery, while another asserted that it was so obvious, that they could only express their astonishment that it had ever escaped observation. Incredulity and envy are the evil spirits which have often dogged great inventors to their tomb, and there only have vanished.—But I seem writing the "calamities of authors," and have only begun the catalogue.

The reputation of a writer of taste is subject to more difficulties than any other. Similar was the fate of the finest ode-writers in our poetry. On their publication, the odes of COLLINS could find no readers; and those of GRAY, though ushered into the reading world by the fashionable press of Walpole, were condemned as failures. When RACINE produced his "Athalie," it was not at all relished: Boileau indeed declared that he understood these matters better than the public, and prophesied that the public would return to it: they did so; but it was sixty years afterwards; and Racine died without suspecting that "Athalie" was his master-piece. I have heard one of our great poets regret that he had devoted so much of his life to the cultivation of his

art, which arose from a project made in the golden vision of his youth: "at a time," said he, "when I thought that the fountain could never be dried up."—"Your baggage will reach posterity," was observed.—"There is much to spare," was the answer.

Every day we may observe, of a work of genius, that those parts which have all the raciness of the soil, and as such are most liked by its admirers are those which are the most criticised. Modest critics shelter themselves under that general amnesty too freely granted, that tastes are allowed to differ; but we should approximate much nearer to the truth, if we were to say, that but few of mankind are prepared to relish the beautiful with that enlarged taste which comprehends all the forms of feeling which genius may assume; forms which may be necessarily associated with defects. A man of genius composes in a state of intellectual emotion, and the magic of his style consists in the movements of his soul; but the art of conveying those movements is far separated from the feeling which inspires them. The idea in the mind is not always found under the pen, any more than the artist's conception can always breathe in his pencil. Like FIAMINGO'S image, which he kept polishing till his friend exclaimed, "What perfection would you have?"—"Alas!" exclaimed the sculptor, "the original I am labouring to come up to is in my head, but not yet in my hand."

The writer toils, and repeatedly toils, to throw into our minds that sympathy with which we hang over the illusion of his pages, and become himself. ARIOSTO wrote sixteen different ways the celebrated stanza descriptive of a tempest, as appears by his MSS. at Ferrara; and the version he preferred was the last of the sixteen. We know that PETRARCH made forty-four alterations of a single verse: "whether for the thought, the expression, or the harmony, it is evident that as many operations in the heart, the head, or the ear of the poet occurred," observes a man of genius, Ugo Foscolo. Quintilian and Horace dread the over-fondness of an author for his compositions: alteration is not always improvement. A picture over-finished fails in its effect. If the hand of the artist cannot leave it, how much beauty may it undo! yet still he is lingering, still strengthening the weak, still subduing the daring, still searching for that single idea which awakens so many in the minds of others, while often, as it once happened, the dash of despair hangs the foam on the horse's nostrils. I have known a great sculptor, who for twenty years delighted himself with forming in his mind the nymph his hand was always creating. How rapturously he beheld her! what inspiration! what illusion! Alas! the last five years spoiled the

beautiful which he had once reached, and could not stop and finish!

The art of composition, indeed, is of such slow attainment, that a man of genius, late in life, may discover how its secret conceals itself in the habit; how discipline consists in exercise, how perfection comes from experience, and how unity is the last effort of judgment. When Fox meditated on a history which should last with the language, he met his evil genius in this new province. The rapidity and the fire of his elocution were extinguished by a pen unconsecrated by long and previous study; he saw that he could not class with the great historians of every great people; he complained, while he mourned over the fragment of genius which, after such zealous preparation, he dared not complete. CURRAN, an orator of vehement eloquence, often strikingly original, when late in life he was desirous of cultivating literary composition, unaccustomed to its more gradual march, found a pen cold, and destitute of every grace. ROUSSEAU has glowingly described the ceaseless inquietude by which he obtained the seductive eloquence of his style; and has said, that with whatever talent a man may be born, the art of writing is not easily obtained. The existing manuscripts of ROUSSEAU display as many erasures as those of Ariosto or Petrarch; they show his eagerness to dash down his first thoughts, and the art by which he raised them to the impassioned style of his imagination. The memoir of GIBBON was composed seven or nine times, and, after all, was left unfinished; and BUFFON tells us that he wrote his *Époque de la Nature* eighteen times before it satisfied his taste. BURNS's anxiety in finishing his poems was great; "all my poetry," says he, "is the effect of easy composition, but of laborious correction."

POPE, when employed on the Iliad, found it not only occupy his thoughts by day, but haunting his dreams by night, and once wished himself hanged, to get rid of Homer: and that he experienced often such literary agonies, witness his description of the depressions and elevations of genius:

> "Who pants for glory, finds but short repose;
> A breath revives him, or a breath o'erthrows!'

When ROMNEY undertook to commence the first subject for the Shakespeare Gallery, in the rapture of enthusiasm, amidst the sublime and pathetic labouring in his whole mind, arose the terror of failure. The subject chosen was "The Tempest;" and, as Hayley truly observes, it created many a tempest in the fluctuating spirits of Romney. The vehement desire of that perfection which genius conceives, and cannot always execute, held

a perpetual contest with that dejection of spirits which degrades the unhappy sufferer, and casts him, grovelling among the mean of his class. In a national work a man of genius pledges his honour to the world for its performance; but to redeem that pledge, there is a darkness in the uncertain issue, and he is risking his honour for ever. By that work he will always be judged, for public failures are never forgotten, and it is not then a party, but the public itself, who become his adversaries. With ROMNEY it was "a fever of the mad;" and his friends could scarcely inspire him with sufficient courage to proceed with his arduous picture, which exercised his imagination and his pencil for several years. I have heard that he built a painting-room purposely for this picture; and never did an anchorite pour forth a more fervent orison to Heaven, than Romney when this labour was complete. He had a fine genius, with all its solitary feelings, but he was uneducated, and incompetent even to write a letter; yet on this occasion, relieved from his intense anxiety under so long a work, he wrote one of the most eloquent. It is a document in the history of genius, and reveals all those feelings which are here too faintly described [1]. I once heard an amiable author, whose literary career has perhaps not answered the fond hopes of his youth, half in anger and in love, declare that he would retire to some solitude, where, if any one would follow him, he would found a new order—the order of THE DISAPPOINTED.

Thus the days of a man of genius are passed in labours as unremitting and exhausting as those of the artisan. The world is not always aware, that to some, meditation, composition, and even conversation, may inflict pains undetected by the eye and the tenderness of friendship. Whenever ROUSSEAU passed a morning in society, it was observed, that in the evening he was dissatisfied and distressed; and JOHN HUNTER, in a mixed company, found that conversation fatigued, instead of amusing him. HAWKESWORTH, in the second paper of the Adventurer, has drawn, from his own feelings, an eloquent comparative estimate of intellectual with corporeal labour; it may console the humble mechanic; and Plato, in his work on laws, seems to have been

[1] "My dear friend;

"Your kindness in rejoicing so heartily at the birth of my picture, has given me great satisfaction.

"There has been an anxiety labouring in my mind the greatest part of the last twelvemonth. At times it had nearly overwhelmed me. I thought I should absolutely have sunk into despair. O! what a kind friend is, in those times! I thank God, whatever my picture may be, I can say thus much,—I am a greater philosopher, and a better Christian."

aware of this analogy, for he consecrates all working men or artisans to Vulcan and Minerva, because both those deities alike are hard labourers. Yet with genius all does not terminate, even with the most skilful labour. What the toiling Vulcan and the thoughtful Minerva may want, will too often be absent—the presence of the Graces. In the allegorical picture of the School of Design, by Carlo Maratti, where the students are led through their various studies, in the opening clouds above the academy are seen the Graces, hovering over their pupils, with an inscription they must often recollect,—*Senza di noi ogni fatica è vana.*

The anxious uncertainty of an author for his compositions resembles the anxiety of a lover when he has written to a mistress who has not yet decided on his claims; he repents his labour, for he thinks he has written too much, while he is mortified at recollecting that he had omitted some things which he imagines would have secured the object of his wishes. Madame DE STAEL, who has often entered into feelings familiar to a literary and political family, in a parallel between ambition and genius, has distinguished them in this; that while "ambition *perseveres* in the desire of acquiring power, genius *flags* of itself. Genius in the midst of society is a pain, an internal fever which would require to be treated as a real disease, if the records of glory did not soften the sufferings it produces."—"Athenians! what troubles have you not cost me," exclaimed DEMOSTHENES, "that I may be talked of by you!"

These moments of anxiety often darken the brightest hours of genius. RACINE had extreme sensibility; the pain inflicted by a severe criticism outweighed all the applause he received. He seems to have felt, what he was often reproached with, that his Greeks, his Jews, and his Turks, were all inmates of Versailles. He had two critics, who, like our Dennis with Pope and Addison, regularly dogged his pieces as they appeared. Corneille's objections he would attribute to jealousy—at his pieces when burlesqued at the Italian theatre, he would smile outwardly, though sick at heart;—but his son informs us, that a stroke of raillery from his witty friend Chapelle, whose pleasantry hardly sheathed its bitterness, sunk more deeply into his heart than the burlesques at the Italian theatre, the protest of Corneille, and the iteration of the two Dennises. More than once MOLIÈRE and RACINE, in vexation of spirit, resolved to abandon their dramatic career; it was BOILEAU who ceaselessly animated their languor: "Posterity," he cried, "will avenge the injustice of our age!" And CONGREVE'S comedies met with such moderate success, that it appears the author was extremely mortified,

and on the ill reception of "The Way of the World," determined to write no more for the stage. When he told Voltaire, on the French wit's visit, that Voltaire must consider him as a private gentleman, and not as an author, which apparent affectation called down on CONGREVE the sarcastic severity of the French author, more of mortification and humility might have been in CONGREVE's language than of affectation or pride.

The life of TASSO abounds with pictures of a complete exhaustion of this kind. His contradictory critics had perplexed him with the most intricate literary discussions, and either occasioned or increased a mental alienation. In one of his letters, we find that he repents the composition of his great poem, for although his own taste approved of that marvellous, which still forms a noble part of its creation, yet he confesses that his cold reasoning critics have decided, that the history of his hero Godfrey required another species of conduct. "Hence," cries the unhappy bard, "doubts torment me; but for the past, and what is done, I know of no remedy;" and he longs to precipitate the publication, that "he may be delivered from misery and agony." He solemnly swears,—"did not the circumstances of my situation compel me, I would not print it, even perhaps during my life, I so much doubt of its success." Such was that painful state of fear and doubt experienced by the author of the "Jerusalem Delivered," when he gave it to the world; a state of suspense, among the children of imagination, in which none are more liable to participate than the true sensitive artist. We may now inspect the severe correction of Tasso's muse, in the fac-simile of a page of his manuscripts in Mr. Dibdin's late Tour. She seems to have inflicted tortures on his pen, surpassing even those which may be seen in the fac-simile page which, thirty years ago, I gave of Pope's Homer. At Florence may still be viewed the many works begun and abandoned by the genius of MICHAEL ANGELO; they are preserved inviolate—"so sacred is the terror of Michael Angelo's genius!" exclaims Forsyth. These works are not always to be considered as failures of the chisel; they appear rather to have been rejected for coming short of the artist's first conceptions: yet, in a strain of sublime poetry, he has preserved his sentiments on the force of intellectual labour; he thought that there was nothing which the imagination conceived, that could not be made visible in marble, if the hand were made to obey the mind:—

Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto,
Ch' un marmo solo in se non circoscriva
Col suo soverchio, e solo a quello arriva
La man che obbedisce all' intelletto.

IMITATED.

The sculptor never yet conceived a thought
That yielding marble has refused to aid;
But never with a mastery he wrought—
Save when the hand the intellect obeyed.

An interesting domestic story has been preserved of GESSNER, who so zealously devoted his graver and his pencil to the arts. His sensibility was ever struggling after that ideal excellence which he could not attain. Often he sunk into fits of melancholy, and, gentle as he was, the tenderness of his wife and friends could not soothe his distempered feelings; it was necessary to abandon him to his own thoughts, till, after a long abstinence from his neglected works, in a lucid moment, some accident occasioned him to return to them. In one of these hypochondria of genius, after a long interval of despair, one morning at breakfast with his wife, his eye fixed on one of his pictures: it was a group of fauns with young shepherds dancing at the entrance of a cavern shaded with vines; his eye appeared at length to glisten; and a sudden return to good humour broke out in this lively apostrophe, "Ah! see those playful children, they always dance!" This was the moment of gaiety and inspiration, and he flew to his forsaken easel.

La Harpe, an author by profession, observes, that as it has been shown that there are some maladies peculiar to artisans[1], —there are also some sorrows peculiar to them, and which the world can neither pity nor soften, because they do not enter into their experience. The querulous language of so many men of genius has been sometimes attributed to causes very different from the real ones,—the most fortunate live to see their talents contested and their best works decried. Assuredly many an author has sunk into his grave without the consciousness of having obtained that fame for which he had sacrificed an arduous life. The too feeling SMOLLETT has left this testimony to posterity: "Had some of those, who are pleased to call themselves my friends, been at any pains to deserve the character, and told me ingenuously what I had to expect in the capacity of an *author*, I should, in all probability, have spared myself the *incredible labour* and *chagrin* I have since undergone." And SMOLLETT was a popular writer! POPE's solemn declaration in the preface to his collected works comes by no means short of

[1] See Ramazini, "De Morbis Artificium Diatriba," which Dr. James translated in 1750. It is a sad reflection, resulting from this curious treatise, that the arts entail no small mischief upon their respective workmen; so that the means by which they live are too often the occasion of their being hurried out of the world.

SMOLLETT'S avowal. HUME'S philosophical indifference could often suppress that irritability which Pope and Smollet fully indulged.

But were the feelings of HUME more obtuse, or did his temper, gentle as it was by constitution, bear, with a saintly patience, the mortifications his literary life so long endured? After recomposing two of his works, which incurred the same neglect in their altered form, he raised the most sanguine hopes of his History,—but he tells us, "miserable was my disappointment!" Although he never deigned to reply to his opponents, yet they haunted him; and an eye-witness has thus described the irritated author discovering in conversation his suppressed resentment —"His forcible mode of expression, the brilliant quick movements of his eyes, and the gestures of his body," these betrayed the pangs of contempt, or of aversion! HOGARTH, in a fit of the spleen, advertised that he had determined not to give the world any more original works, and intended to pass the rest of his days in painting portraits. The same advertisement is marked by farther irritability. He contemptuously offers the purchasers of his "Analysis of Beauty," to present them *gratis* with "an eighteenpenny pamphlet," published by Ramsay the painter, written in opposition to Hogarth's principles. So untameable was the irritability of this great inventor in art, that he attempts to conceal his irritation by offering to dispose gratuitously of the criticism which had disturbed his nights.

Parties confederate against a man of genius,—as happened to Corneille, to D'Avenant [1], and Milton, and a Pradon and a Settle carry away the meed of a Racine and a Dryden. It was to support the drooping spirit of his friend Racine on the opposition raised against Phædra, that Boileau addressed to him an epistle "On the Utility to be drawn from the Jealousy of the Envious." The calm dignity of the historian DE THOU, amidst the passions of his times, confidently expected that justice from posterity which his own age refused to his early and his late labour. That great man was, however, compelled, by his injured feelings, to compose a poem under the name of another, to serve as his apology against the intolerant court of Rome, and the factious politicians of France; it was a noble subterfuge to which a great genius was forced. The acquaintances of the poet COLLINS probably complained of his wayward humours and ir-

[1] See "Quarrels of Authors," p. 244, on the confederacy of several wits against D'Avenant, a great genius; where I discovered that a volume of poems, said "to be written by the author's friends" which had hitherto been referred to as a volume of panegyrics, contains nothing but irony and satire, which had escaped the discovery of so many transcribers of title-pages, frequently miscalled literary historians.

ritability; but how could they sympathise with the secret mortification of the poet, who imagined that he had composed his Pastorals on wrong principles, or, when in the agony of his soul, he consigned to the flames with his own hands his unsold, but immortal odes? Can we forget the dignified complaint of the Rambler, with which he awfully closes his work, appealing to posterity?

Genius contracts those peculiarities, of which it is so loudly accused, in its solitary occupations; that loftiness of spirit, those quick jealousies, those excessive affections and aversions, which view everything as it passes in its own ideal world, and rarely as it exists in the mediocrity of reality. If this irritability of genius be a malady which has raged even among philosophers, we must not be surprised at the temperament of poets. These last have abandoned their country; they have changed their name; they have punished themselves with exile in the rage of their disorder. No! not poets only. DESCARTES sought in vain, even in his secreted life, for a refuge for his genius; he thought himself persecuted in France, he thought himself calumniated among strangers, and he went and died in Sweden; and little did that man of genius think that his countrymen would beg to have his ashes restored to them. Even the reasoning HUME once proposed to change his name and his country; and I believe did. The great poetical genius of our own times has openly alienated himself from the land of his brothers. He becomes immortal in the language of a people whom he would contemn [1]. Does he accept with ingratitude the fame he loves more than life?

Such, then, is that state of irritability in which men of genius participate, whether they be inventors, men of learning, fine writers, or artists. It is a state not friendly to equality of temper. In the various humours incidental to it, when they are often deeply affected, the cause escapes all perception of sympathy. The intellectual malady eludes even the tenderness of friend-

[1] I shall preserve a manuscript note of Lord BYRON on this passage; not without a hope that we shall never receive from him the genius of Italian poetry, otherwise than in the language of his "*father land*;" an expressive term, which I adopted from the Dutch language some years past, and which I have seen since sanctioned by the pens of Lord Byron and of Mr. Southey.

His Lordship has here observed, "It is not my fault that I am obliged to write in English. If I understood my present language equally well, I would write in it; but this will require ten years at least to form a style: no tongue so easy to acquire a little of, or so difficult to master thoroughly, as Italian." On the same page I find the following note: "What was rumoured of me in that language? If true, I was unfit for England: if false, England was unfit for me:—'There is a world elsewhere.' I have never regretted for a moment that country, but often that I ever returned to it at all."

ship. At those moments, the lightest injury to the feelings which at another time would make no impression, may produce a perturbed state of feeling in the warm temper, or the corroding chagrin of a self-wounded spirit. These are moments which claim the encouragements of a friendship animated by a high esteem for the intellectual excellence of the man of genius; not the general intercourse of society; not the insensibility of the dull, nor the levity of the volatile.

Men of genius are often reverenced only where they are known by their writings; intellectual beings in the romance of life—in its history, they are men! ERASMUS compared them to the great figures in tapestry-work, which lose their effect when not seen at a distance. Their foibles and their infirmities are obvious to their associates, often only capable of discerning these qualities. The defects of great men are the consolation of the dunces.

CHAPTER VIII.

The spirit of literature and the spirit of society.—The Inventors.—Society offers seduction and not reward to men of genius.—The notions of persons of fashion of men of genius.—The habitudes of the man of genius distinct from those of the man of society.—Study, meditation, and enthusiasm, the progress of genius.—The disagreement between the men of the world and the literary character.

THE INVENTORS who inherited little or nothing from their predecessors, appear to have pursued their insulated studies in the full independence of their mind and development of their inventive faculty; they stood apart, in seclusion, the solitary lights of their age. Such were the founders of our literature; Bacon and Hobbes, Newton and Milton. Even so late as the days of Dryden, Addison, and Pope, the man of genius drew his circle round his intimates; his day was uniform, his habits unbroken; and he was never too far removed, nor too long estranged, from meditation and reverie : his works were the sources of his pleasure ere they became the labours of his pride.

But when a more uniform light of knowledge illuminates from all sides, the genius of society, made up of so many sorts of genius, becomes greater than the genius of the individual who has entirely yielded himself up to his solitary art. Hence the character of a man of genius becomes subordinate. A conversation age succeeds a studious one; and the family of genius, the poet, the painter, and the student, are no longer recluses. They mix with their rivals, who are jealous of equality, or with others, who, incapable of valuing them for themselves alone, rate them but as parts of an integral.

The man of genius is now trammelled with the artificial and mechanical forms of life; and in too close an intercourse with society, the loneliness and raciness of thinking is modified away in its seductive conventions. An excessive indulgence in the pleasures of social life, constitutes the great interests of a luxuriant and opulent age; but of late, while the arts of assembling in large societies have been practised, varied by all forms, and pushed on to all excesses, it may become a question whether by them our happiness is as much improved, or our individual character as well formed, as in a society not so heterogeneous and unsocial, as that crowd, termed, with the sort of modesty peculiar to our times, "a small party:" the simplicity of parade, the humility of pride, engendered by the egotism which multiplies itself in proportion to the numbers it assembles.

It may too be a question, whether the literary man and the artist are not immolating their genius to society, when, in the shadowiness of assumed talents—that counterfeiting of all shapes—they lose their real form, with the mockery of Proteus. But nets of roses catch their feet, and a path, where all the senses are flattered, is now opened to win an Epictetus from his hut. The art of multiplying the enjoyments of society is discovered in the morning lounge, the evening dinner, and the midnight coterie. In frivolous fatigues, and vigils without meditation, perish the unvalued hours which, true genius knows, are always too brief for art, and too rare to catch its inspirations. Hence so many of our contemporaries, whose card-racks are crowded, have produced only flashy fragments. Efforts, but not works; they seem to be effects without causes; and as a great author, who is not one of them, once observed to me, "They waste a barrel of gunpowder in squibs."

And yet it is seduction, and not reward, which mere fashionable society offers the man of true genius. He will be sought for with enthusiasm, but he cannot escape from his certain fate—that of becoming tiresome to his pretended admirers.

At first the idol—shortly he is changed into a victim. He forms, indeed, a figure in their little pageant, and is invited as a sort of *improvisatore;* but the esteem they concede to him is only a part of the system of politeness; and should he be dull in discovering the favourite quality of their self-love, or in participating in their volatile tastes, he will find frequent opportunities of observing, with the sage at the court of Cyprus, that "what he knows is not proper for this place; and what is proper for this place he knows not." This society takes little personal interest in the literary character. HORACE WALPOLE lets us into this secret when writing to another man of fashion, on such a man of genius as GRAY: "I agree with you

most absolutely in your opinion about GRAY; he is the worst company in the world. From a melancholy turn, from living reclusely, and from a little too much dignity, he never converses easily; all his words are measured and chosen, and formed into sentences: his writings are admirable—he himself is not agreeable." This volatile being in himself personified the quintessence of that society which is called "the world," and could not endure that equality of intellect which genius exacts. He rejected Chatterton, and quarrelled with every literary man and every artist whom he first invited to familiarity—and then hated. Witness the fates of Bentley, of Muntz, of Gray, of Cole, and others. Such a mind was incapable of appreciating the literary glory on which the mighty mind of BURKE was meditating. WALPOLE knew BURKE at a critical moment of his life, and he has recorded his own feelings:—"There was a young Mr. BURKE who wrote a book in the style of Lord Bolingbroke, that was much admired. He is a sensible man, but has not *worn off his authorism yet,* and thinks there is nothing so charming as writers, and to be one: *he will know better one of these days.*" GRAY and BURKE! What mighty men must be submitted to the petrifying sneer, that indifference of selfism for great sympathies, of this volatile and heartless man of literature and rank!

> "——————— That thing of silk,
> Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk!"

The confidential confession of RACINE to his son is remarkable: "Do not think that I am sought after by the great for my dramas; Corneille composes nobler verses than mine, but no one notices him, and he only pleases by the mouth of the actors. I never allude to my works when with men of the world, but I amuse them about matters they like to hear. My talent with them consists, not in making them feel that I have any, but in showing them that they have." RACINE treated the great like the children of society; CORNEILLE would not compromise for the tribute he exacted, but he consoled himself when, at his entrance into the theatre, the audience usually rose to salute him. The great comic genius of France, who indeed was a very thoughtful and serious man, addressed a poem to the painter MIGNARD, expressing his conviction that "the court," by which a Frenchman of the court of Louis XIV. meant the society we call "fashionable," is fatal to the perfection of art:—

> "Qui se donne à la cour se dérobe à son art;
> Un esprit partagé rarement se consomme,
> Et les emplois de feu demandent tout de l'homme."

Has not the fate in society of our reigning literary favourites been uniform? Their mayoralty hardly exceeds the year: they are pushed aside to put in their place another, who, in his turn, must descend. Such is the history of the literary character encountering the perpetual difficulty of appearing what he really is not, while he sacrifices to a few, in a certain corner of the metropolis, who have long fantastically styled themselves "the world," that more dignified celebrity which makes an author's name more familiar than his person. To one who appeared astonished at the extensive celebrity of BUFFON, the modern Pliny replied, "I have passed fifty years at my desk." HAYDN would not yield up to society more than those hours which were not devoted to study. These were indeed but few: and such were the uniformity and retiredness of his life, that "He was for a long time the only musical man in Europe who was ignorant of the celebrity of Joseph Haydn." And has not one, the most sublime of the race, sung,

> ——— che seggendo in piuma,
> In Fama non si vien, nè sotto coltre;
> Sanza la qual chi sua vita consuma
> Cotal vestigio in terra di se làscia
> Qual fummo in aere, ed in acqua la schiuma.
>
> "For not on downy plumes, nor under shade
> Of canopy reposing, Fame is won:
> Without which, whosoe'er consumes his days,
> Leaveth such vestige of himself on earth
> As smoke in air or foam upon the wave[1]."

But men of genius, in their intercourse with persons of fashion, have a secret inducement to court that circle. They feel a perpetual want of having the reality of their talents confirmed to themselves, and they often step into society to observe in what degree they are objects of attention; for, though ever accused of vanity, the greater part of men of genius feel that their existence, as such, must depend on the opinions of others. This standard is in truth always problematical and variable; yet they cannot hope to find a more certain one among their rivals, who at all times are adroitly depreciating their brothers, and "dusking" their lustre. They discover among those cultivators of literature and the arts who have recourse to them for their pleasure, impassioned admirers, rather than unmerciful judges; judges, who have only time to acquire that degree of illumination which is just sufficient to set at ease the fears of these claimants of genius.

When literary men assemble together, what mimetic friend-

[1] Cary's Dante, Canto xxiv.

ships, in their mutual corruption! Creatures of intrigue, they borrow other men's eyes, and act by feelings often even contrary to their own: they wear a mask on their face, and only sing a tune they have caught. Some Hierophant in their mysteries proclaims their elect whom they have to initiate, and their profane who are to stand apart under their ban. They bend to the spirit of the age, but they do not elevate the public to them; they care not for truth, but only study to produce effect, and they do nothing for fame but what obtains an instant purpose. Yet their fame is not therefore the more real, for everything connected with fashion becomes obsolete. Her ear has a great susceptibility of weariness, and her eye rolls for incessant novelty. Never was she earnest for anything. Men's minds with her became tarnished and old-fashioned as furniture. But the steams of rich dinners, the eye which sparkles with the wines of France, the luxurious night which flames with more heat and brilliancy than God has made the day, this is the world the man of coterie-celebrity has chosen; and the Epicurean, as long as his senses do not cease to act, laughs at the few who retire to the solitary midnight lamp. Posthumous fame is—a nothing! Such men live like unbelievers in a future state, and their narrow calculating spirit coldly dies in their artificial world: but true genius looks at a nobler source of its existence; it catches inspiration in its insulated studies; and to the great genius, who feels how his present is necessarily connected with his future celebrity, posthumous fame is a reality—for the sense acts upon him!

The habitudes of genius, before genius loses its freshness in this society, are the mould in which the character is cast; and these, in spite of all the disguise of the man, will make him a distinct being from the man of society. Those who have assumed the literary character, often for purposes very distinct from literary ones, imagine that their circle is the public; but in this factitious public all their interests, their opinions, and even their passions, are temporary, and the admirers with the admired pass away with their season. "It is not sufficient that we speak the same language," says a witty philosopher, "but we must learn their dialect; we must think as they think, and we must echo their opinions, as we act by imitation." Let the man of genius then dread to level himself to the mediocrity of feeling and talent required in such circles of society, lest he become one of themselves; he will soon find that to think like them, will in time become to act like them. But he who in solitude adopts no transient feelings, and reflects no artificial lights, who is only himself, possesses an immense advantage: he has not attached importance to what is merely local and fugitive, but listens to

interior truths and fixes on the immutable nature of things. He is the man of every age. Malebranche has observed, that "It is not indeed thought to be charitable to disturb common opinions, because it is not truth which unites society as it exists, so much as opinion and custom:" a principle which the world would not, I think, disagree with; but which tends to render folly wisdom itself, and to make error immortal.

Ridicule is the light scourge of society, and the terror of genius. Ridicule surrounds him with her chimeras, which, like the shadowy monsters opposing Æneas, are impalpable to his strokes: but remember when the sibyl bade the hero proceed without noticing them, he found these airy nothings as harmless as they were unreal. The habits of the literary character will, however, be tried by the men and women of the world by their own standard: they have no other; the salt of ridicule gives a poignancy to their deficient comprehension and their perfect ignorance of the persons or things which are the subjects of their ingenious animadversions. The habits of the literary character seem inevitably repulsive to persons of the world. VOLTAIRE, and his companion, the scientific Madame DE CHATELET, she who introduced Newton to the French nation, lived entirely devoted to literary pursuits, and their habits were strictly literary. It happened once that this learned pair dropped unexpectedly into a fashionable circle in the *château* of a French nobleman. A Madame de Staël, the *persifleur* in office of Madame Du Deffand, has copiously narrated the whole affair. They arrived at midnight, like two famished spectres, and there was some trouble to put them to supper and bed. They are called apparitions, because they were never visible by day, only at ten at night; for the one is busied in describing great deeds, and the other in commenting on Newton. Like other apparitions, they are uneasy companions: they will neither play nor walk; they will not dissipate their mornings with the charming circle about them, nor allow the charming circle to break into their studies. Voltaire and Madame de Chatelet would have suffered the same pain in being forced to an abstinence of their regular studies, as this circle of "agréables" would have at the loss of their meals and their airings. However, the *persifleur* declares they were ciphers "en société," adding no value to the number, and to which their learned writings bear no reference.

But if this literary couple would not play, what was worse, Voltaire poured out a vehement declamation against a fashionable species of gambling, which appears to have made them all stare. But Madame de Chatelet is the more frequent victim of our *persifleur*. The learned lady would change her apartment

—for it was too noisy, and it had smoke without fire,—which last was her emblem. "She is reviewing her *Principia;* an exercise she repeats every year, without which precaution they might escape from her, and get so far away that she might never find them again. I believe that her head in respect to them is a house of imprisonment rather than the place of their birth; so that she is right to watch them closely; and she prefers the fresh air of this occupation to our amusements, and persists in her invisibility till night-time. She has six or seven tables in her apartments, for she wants them of all sizes; immense ones to spread out her papers—solid ones to hold her instruments—lighter ones, etc. Yet with all this she could not escape from the accident which happened to Philip II., after passing the night in writing, when a bottle of ink fell over the despatches; but the lady did not imitate the moderation of the prince; indeed, she had not written on state affairs, and what was spoilt in her room was algebra, much more difficult to copy out." Here is a pair of portraits of a great poet and a great mathematician, whose habits were discordant with the fashionable circle in which they resided—the representation is just, for it is by one of the coterie itself.

Study, meditation, and enthusiasm,—this is the progress of genius, and these cannot be the habits of him who lingers till he can only live among polished crowds; who, if he bear about him the consciousness of genius, will still be acting under their influences. And perhaps there never was one of this class of men who had not either first entirely formed himself in solitude, or who amidst society will not be often breaking out to seek for himself. WILKES, no longer touched by the fervours of literary and patriotic glory, suffered life to melt away as a domestic voluptuary; and then it was that he observed with some surprise of the great Earl of CHATHAM, that he sacrificed every pleasure of social life, even in youth, to his great pursuit of eloquence. That ardent character studied Barrow's Sermons so often as to repeat them from memory, and could even read twice from beginning to end Bailey's Dictionary; these are little facts which belong only to great minds! The earl himself acknowledged an artifice he practised in his intercourse with society, for he said, "when he was young, he always came late into company, and left it early." VITTORIO ALFIERI, and a brother-spirit, our own noble poet, were rarely seen amidst the brilliant circle in which they were born. The workings of their imagination were perpetually emancipating them, and one loneliness of feeling proudly insulated them among the unimpassioned triflers of their rank. They preserved unbroken the unity of their character, in constantly escaping from the processional

spectacle of society [1]. It is no trivial observation of another noble] writer, Lord SHAFTESBURY, that "it may happen that a person may be so much the worse author, for being the finer gentleman."

An extraordinary instance of this disagreement between the man of the world and the literary character, we find in a philosopher seated on a throne. The celebrated JULIAN stained the imperial purple with an author's ink; and when he resided among the Antiochians, his unalterable character shocked that volatile, and luxurious race. He slighted the plaudits of their theatre, he abhorred their dances and their horse-races, he was abstinent even at a festival, and incorrupt himself, perpetually admonished the dissipated citizens of their impious abandonment of the laws of their country. The Antiochians libelled their emperor, and petulantly lampooned his beard, which the philosopher carelessly wore neither perfumed nor curled. JULIAN, scorning to inflict a sharper punishment, pointed at them his satire of "the Misopogon, or the Antiochian; the Enemy of the Beard," where, amidst irony and invective, the literary monarch bestows on himself many exquisite and characteristic touches. All that the persons of fashion alleged against the literary character, JULIAN unreservedly confesses—his undressed beard and awkwardness, his obstinacy, his unsociable habits, his deficient tastes, while at the same time he represents his good qualities as so many extravagancies. But, in this Cervantic pleasantry of self-reprehension, the imperial philosopher has not failed to show this light and corrupt people that the reason he could not possibly resemble them, existed in the unhappy circumstance of having been subject to too strict an education under a family tutor, who had never suffered him to swerve from the one right way, and who (additional misfortune!) had inspired him with such a silly reverence for Plato and Socrates, Aristotle and Theophrastus, that he had been induced to make them his models. "Whatever manners," says the emperor, "I may have previously contracted, whether gentle or boorish, it is impossible for me now to alter or unlearn. Habit is said to be a second nature; to oppose it is irksome, but to counteract *the study of more than thirty years* is extremely difficult, especially when it has been imbibed with so much attention."

And what if men of genius, relinquishing their habits, could

[1] In a note which Lord BYRON has written in a copy of this work his lordship says, "I fear this was not the case; I have been but too much in that circle, especially in 1812-13-14."

To the expression of "one deep loneliess of feeling," his lordship has marked in the margin "True." I am gratified to confirm the theory of my ideas of the man of genius, by the practical experience of the greatest of our age.

do this violence to their nature, should we not lose the original for a factitious genius, and spoil one race without improving the other? If nature, and habit, that second nature which prevails even over the first, have created two beings distinctly different, what mode of existence shall ever assimilate them? Antipathies and sympathies, those still occult causes, however concealed, will break forth at an unguarded moment. Clip the wings of an eagle that he may roost among domestic fowls,—at some unforeseen moment his pinions will overshadow and terrify his tiny associaties, for "the feathered king" will be still musing on the rock and the cloud.

The man of genius will be restive even in his trammelled paces. Too impatient amidst the heartless courtesies of society, and little practised in the minuter attentions, he has rarely sacrificed to the unlaughing graces of Lord Chesterfield. Plato ingeniously compares SOCRATES to the gallipots of the Athenian apothecaries: the grotesque figures of owls and apes were painted on their exterior, but they contained within precious balsams. The man of genius amidst many a circle may exclaim with THEMISTOCLES, "I cannot fiddle, but I can make a little village a great city;" and with CORNEILLE, he may be allowed to smile at his own deficiencies, and even disdain to please in certain conventional manners, asserting that "wanting all these things, he was not the less Corneille."

But with the great thinkers and students, their character is still more obdurate. ADAM SMITH could never free himself from the embarrassed manners of a recluse; he was often absent, and his grave and formal conversation made him seem distant and reserved, when in fact no man had warmer feelings for his intimates. One who knew Sir ISAAC NEWTON tells us, that "he would sometimes be silent and thoughtful, and look all the while as if he were saying his prayers." A French princess, desirous of seeing the great moralist NICOLLE, experienced an inconceivable disappointment when the moral instructor, entering with the most perplexing bow imaginable, silently sank into his chair. The interview promoted no conversation, and the retired student, whose elevated spirit might have endured martyrdom, shrunk with timidity in the unaccustomed honour of conversing with a princess and having nothing to say. Observe Hume thrown into a most ridiculous attitude by a woman of talents and coterie celebrity. Our philosopher was called on to perform his part in one of those inventions of the hour to which the fashionable, like children in society, have sometimes resorted to attract their world by the rumour of some new extravagance. In the present, poor HUME was to represent a sultan on a sofa, sitting between two slaves, who were the prettiest and most viva-

cious of Parisians. Much was anticipated from this literary exhibition. The two slaves were ready at repartee, but the utter simplicity of the sultan displayed a blockishness which blunted all edge. The phlegmatic metaphysician and historian only gave a sign of life by repeating the same awkward gesture, and the same ridiculous exclamation, without end. One of the fair slaves soon discovered the unchangeable nature of the forlorn philosopher, impatiently exclaiming, "I guessed as much, never was there such a calf of a man!"—"Since this affair," adds Madame d'Epinay, "Hume is at present banished to the class of spectators." The philosopher, indeed, had formed a more correct conception of his own character than the volatile sylphs of the Parisian circle, for in writing to the Countess de Boufflers, on an invitation to Paris, he said, "I have rusted on amid books and study; have been little engaged in the active, and not much in the pleasurable, scenes of life; and am more accustomed to a select society than to general companies." If HUME made a ridiculous figure in these circles, the error did not lie on the side of that cheerful and profound philosopher.—This subject leads our inquiries to the nature of *the conversations of men of genius.*

CHAPTER IX.

Conversations of men of genius.—Their deficient agreeableness may result from qualities which conduce to their greatness.—Slow-minded men not the dullest.—The conversationists not the ablest writers.—Their true excellence in conversation consists of associations with their pursuits.

IN conversation the sublime DANTE was taciturn or satirical; BUTLER sullen or caustic; GRAY and ALFIERI seldom talked or smiled; DESCARTES, whose habits had formed him for solitude and meditation, was silent; ROUSSEAU was remarkably trite in conversation, not an idea, not a word of fancy or eloquence warmed him; ADDISON and MOLIERE in society were only observers; and DRYDEN has very honestly told us, "My conversation is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and reserved; in short, I am none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, or make repartees." POPE had lived among "the great," not only in rank but in intellect, the most delightful conversationists; but the poet felt that he could not contribute to these seductive pleasures, and at last confessed that he could amuse and instruct himself much more by another means: "As much company as I have kept, and as much as I love [illegible] reading better, and would rather be employed in [illegible] in the most agreeable conversation." POPE'S co[illegible]

preserved by Spence, was sensible; and it would seem that he had never said but one witty thing in his whole life, for only one has been recorded. It was ingeniously said of VAUCANSON, that he was as much an automaton as any which he made. HOGARTH and SWIFT, who looked on the circles of society with eyes of inspiration, were absent in company; but their grossness and asperity did not prevent the one from being the greatest of comic painters, nor the other as much a creator of manners in his way. Genius, even in society, is pursuing its own operations, and it would cease to be itself were it always to act like others.

Men of genius who are habitually eloquent, who have practised conversation as an art, for some even sacrifice their higher pursuits to this perishable art of acting, have indeed excelled, and in the most opposite manner. HORNE TOOKE finely discriminates the wit in conversation of Sheridan and Curran, after having passed an evening in their company. "SHERIDAN'S wit was like steel highly polished and sharpened for display and use; CURRAN'S was a mine of virgin gold, incessantly crumbling away from its own richness." Charles Butler, whose Reminiscences of his illustrious contemporaries are derived from personal intercourse, has correctly described the familiar conversations of PITT, FOX, and BURKE: "The most intimate friends of Mr. FOX complained of his too frequent ruminating silence. Mr. PITT talked, and his talk was fascinating. Mr. BURKE'S conversation was rambling, but splendid and instructive beyond comparison." Let me add, that the finest genius of our times, is also the most delightful man; he is that rarest among the rare of human beings, whom to have known is nearly to adore; whom to have seen, to have heard, forms an era in our life; whom youth remembers with enthusiasm, and whose presence the men and women of "the world" feel like a dream from which they would not awaken. His *bonhomie* attaches our hearts to him by its simplicity; his legendary conversation makes us, for a moment, poets like himself[1].

But that deficient agreeableness in social life with which men of genius have been often reproached, may really result from the nature of those qualities which conduce to the greatness of their public character. A thinker whose mind is saturated with knowledge on a particular subject, will be apt to deliver himself authoritatively; but he will then pass for a dogmatist: should he hesitate, that he may correct an equivocal expression, or bring nearer a remote idea, he is in danger of sinking into pedantry or rising into genius. Even the fulness of knowledge has

[1] This was written under the inspiration of a night's conversation, or rather li[illegible] SCOTT.—I cannot bring myself to erase what now, alas! [illegible] swift termination of his glorious existence.

its tediousness. "It is rare," says MALEBRANCHE, "that those who meditate profoundly, can explain well the objects they have meditated on; for they hesitate when they have to speak; they are scrupulous to convey false ideas or use inaccurate terms. They do not choose to speak, like others, merely for the sake of talking." A vivid and sudden perception of truth, or a severe scrutiny after it, may elevate the voice, and burst with an irruptive heat on the subdued tone of conversation. These men are too much in earnest for the weak or the vain. Such seriousness kills their feeble animal spirits. SMEATON, a creative genius of his class, had a warmth of expression which seemed repulsive to many: it arose from an intense application of mind, which impelled him to break out hastily when anything was said that did not accord with his ideas. Persons who are obstinate till they can give up their notions with a safe conscience, are troublesome intimates. Often too the cold tardiness of decision is only the strict balancing of scepticism or candour, while obscurity as frequently may arise from the deficiency of previous knowledge in the listener. It was said that NEWTON in conversation did not seem to understand his own writings, and it was supposed that his memory had decayed. The fact, however, was not so; and Pemberton makes a curious distinction, which accounts for NEWTON *not always being ready to speak* on subjects of which he was the sole master. "Inventors seem to treasure up in their own minds what they have found out, after another manner than those do the same things that have not this inventive faculty. The former, when they have occasion to produce their knowledge, in some means are obliged immediately to investigate part of what they want. For this they are not equally fit at all times; and thus it has often happened, that such as retain things chiefly by means of a very strong memory, have appeared off-hand more expert than the discoverers themselves."

A peculiar characteristic in the conversations of men of genius, which has often injured them when the listeners were not intimately acquainted with the men, are those sports of a vacant mind, those sudden impulses to throw out paradoxical opinions, and to take unexpected views of things in some humour of the moment. These fanciful and capricious ideas are the grotesque images of a playful mind, and are at least as frequently misrepresented as they are misunderstood. But thus the cunning Philistines are enabled to triumph over the strong and gifted man, because in the hour of confidence, and in the abandonment of the mind, he had laid his head in the lap of wantonness, and taught them how he might be shorn of his strength. Dr. JOHNSON appears often to have indulged this amusement, both in

good and ill humour. Even such a calm philosopher as ADAM SMITH, as well as such a child of imagination as BURNS, were remarked for this ordinary habit of men of genius; which perhaps as often originates in a gentle feeling of contempt for their auditors, as from any other cause. Many years after having written the above, I discovered two recent confessions which confirm the principle. A literary character, the late Dr. LEYDEN, acknowledged, that "in conversation I often verge so nearly on absurdity, that I know it is perfectly easy to misconceive me, as well as to misrepresent me." And Miss Edgeworth, in describing her father's conversation, observes, that "his openness went too far, almost to imprudence; exposing him not only to be misrepresented, but to be misunderstood. Those who did not know him intimately, often took literally what was either said in sport, or spoken with the intention of making a strong impression for some good purpose." CUMBERLAND, whose conversation was delightful, happily describes the species I have noticed. "Nonsense talked by men of wit and understanding in the hour of relaxation is of the very finest essence of conviviality; and a treat delicious to those who have the sense to comprehend it; but it implies a trust in the company not always to be risked." The truth is, that many, eminent for their genius, have been remarkable in society for a simplicity and playfulness almost infantine. Such was the gaiety of HUME, such the *bonhomie* of FOX; and one who had long lived in a circle of men of genius in the last age, was disposed to consider this infantine simplicity as characteristic of genius. It is a solitary grace, which can never lend its charm to a man of the world, whose purity of mind has long been lost in a hacknied intercourse with everything exterior to himself.

But above all, what most offends, is that freedom of opinion which a man of genius can no more divest himself of, than of the features of his face? But what if this untractable obstinacy be only resistance of character? BURNS never could account to himself why, "though when he had a mind he was pretty generally beloved, he could never get the art of commanding respect," and imagined it was owing to his deficiency in what Sterne calls "that understrapping virtue of discretion;" "I am so apt to a *lapsus linguæ*," says this honest sinner. Amidst the stupidity of a formal circle, and the inanity of triflers, however, such men may conceal their impatience, one of them has described the reaction of this suppressed feeling: "The force with which it burst out when the pressure was taken off, gave the measure of the constraint which had been endured." ERASMUS, that learned and charming writer, who was blest with the genius which could enliven a folio, has well described himself,

sum naturâ propensior ad jocos quam fortasse deceat:— more constitutionally inclined to pleasantry than, as he is pleased to add, perhaps became him. We know in his intimacy with Sir Thomas More, that Erasmus was a most exhilarating companion; yet in his intercourse with the great he was not fortunate. At the first glance he saw through affectation and parade, his praise of folly was too ironical, and his freedom carried with it no pleasantry for those who knew not to prize a laughing sage.

In conversation, the operations of the intellect with some are habitually slow, but there will be found no difference between the result of their perceptions, and those of a quicker nature; and hence it is, that slow-minded men are not, as men of the world imagine, always the dullest. NICOLLE said of a scintillant wit, "He vanquishes me in the drawing-room, but surrenders to me at discretion on the stairs." Many a great wit has thought the wit it was too late to speak, and many a great reasoner has only reasoned when his opponent has disappeared. Conversation with such men is a losing game; and it is often lamentable to observe, how men of genius are reduced to a state of helplessness from not commanding their attention, while inferior intellects habitually are found to possess what is called "a ready mind." For this reason some, as it were in despair, have shut themselves up in silence. A lively Frenchman, in describing the distinct sorts of conversation of his literary friends, among whom was Dr. FRANKLIN, energetically hits off that close observer and thinker, wary, even in society, by noting down "the silence of the celebrated FRANKLIN." We learn from Cumberland, that Lord Mansfield did not promote that conversation which gave him any pains to carry on. He resorted to society for simple relaxation, and could even find a pleasure in dulness when accompanied with placidity. "It was a kind of cushion to his understanding," observes the wit. CHAUCER, like LA FONTAINE, was more facetious in his tales than in his conversation; for the Countess of Pembroke used to rally him, observing that his silence was more agreeable to her than his talk. TASSO's conversation, which his friend Manso has attempted to preserve for us, was not agreeable. In company he sat absorbed in thought, with a melancholy air; and it was on one of these occasions, that a person present observing that this conduct was indicative of madness, that TASSO, who had heard him, looking on him without emotion, asked whether he was ever acquainted with a madman who knew to hold his tongue! Malebranche tells us that one of these mere men of learning, who can only venture to praise antiquity, once said, "I have seen DESCARTES; I knew him, and frequently have

conversed with him: he was a good sort of man, and was not wanting in sense, but he had nothing extraordinary in him." Had Aristotle spoken French instead of Greek, and had this man frequently conversed with him, unquestionably he would not have discovered, even in this idol of antiquity, anything extraordinary. Two thousand years would have been wanting for our learned critic's perceptions.

It is remarkable that the conversationists have rarely proved to be the abler writers. He whose fancy is susceptible of excitement in the presence of his auditors, making the minds of men run with his own, seizing on the first impressions, and touching the shadows and outlines of things—with a memory where all lies ready at hand, quickened by habitual associations, and varying with all those extemporary changes and fugitive colours which melt away in the rainbow of conversation; with that wit, which is only wit in one place, and for a time; with that vivacity of animal spirits, which often exists separately from the more retired intellectual powers—this man can strike out wit by habit, and pour forth a stream of phrase which has sometimes been imagined to require only to be written down, to be read with the same delight with which it was heard; but he cannot print his tone, nor his air and manner, nor the contagion of his hardihood. All the while we were not sensible of the flutter of his ideas, the incoherence of his transitions, his vague notions, his doubtful assertions, and his meagre knowledge. A pen is the extinguisher of this luminary.

A curious contrast occurred between BUFFON and his friend MONTBELLIARD, who was associated in this great work. The one possessed the reverse qualities of the other: BUFFON, whose style in his composition is elaborate and declamatory, was in conversation coarse and careless. Pleading that conversation with him was only a relaxation, he rather sought than avoided the idiom and the slang of the mob, when these seemed expressive and facetious; while MONTBELLIARD threw every charm of animation over his delightful talk: but when he took his seat at the rival desk of Buffon, an immense interval separated them; he whose tongue dropped the honey and the music of the bee, handled a pen of iron; while Buffon's was the soft pencil of the philosophical painter of nature. COWLEY and KILLEGREW furnish another instance. COWLEY was embarrassed in conversation, and had no quickness in argument or reply: a mind pensive and elegant could not be struck at to catch fire: while with KILLEGREW the sparkling bubbles of his fancy rose and dropped. When the delightful conversationist wrote, the deception ceased. Denham, who knew them both, hit off the difference between them:—

"Had Cowley ne'er spoke, Killegrew ne'er writ,
Combined in one they had made a matchless wit."

Not, however, that a man of genius does not throw out many things in conversation which have only been found admirable when the public possessed them. The public often widely differ from the individual, and a century's opinion may intervene between them. The fate of genius is sometimes that of the Athenian sculptor, who submitted his colossal Minerva to a private party for inspection. Before the artist they trembled for his daring chisel, and the man of genius smiled; behind him they calumniated, and the man of genius forgave. Once fixed in a public place, in the eyes of the whole city, the statue was the Divinity! There is a certain distance at which opinions, as well as statues, must be viewed.

But enough of those defects of men of genius which often attend their conversations. Must we then bow to authorial dignity, and kiss hands, because they are inked? Must we bend to the artist, who considers us as nothing unless we are canvas or marble under his hands? Are there not men of genius, the grace of society, and the charm of their circle? Fortunate men! more blest than their brothers; but for this, they are not the more men of genius, nor the others less. To how many of the ordinary intimates of a superior genius, who complain of his defects, might one say, "Do his productions not delight and sometimes surprise you?—You are silent! I beg your pardon; the *public* has informed you of a great name; you would not otherwise have perceived the precious talent of your neighbour: you know little of your friend but his *name*." The personal familiarity of ordinary minds with a man of genius has often produced a ludicrous prejudice. A Scotchman, to whom the name of *a* Dr. Robertson had travelled down, was curious to know who he was.—"Your neighbour!"—But he could not persuade himself that the man whom he conversed with was the great historian of his country. Even a good man could not believe in the announcement of the Messiah, from the same sort of prejudice: "Can there anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Suffer a man of genius to be such as nature and habit have formed him, and he will then be the most interesting companion; then will you see nothing but his character. AKENSIDE, in conversation with select friends, often touched by a romantic enthusiasm, would pass in review those eminent ancients whom he loved; he imbued with his poetic faculty even the details of their lives; and seemed another Plato while he poured libations to their memory in the language of Plato,

among those whose studies and feelings were congenial with his own. ROMNEY, with a fancy entirely his own, would give vent to his effusions, uttered in a hurried accent and elevated tone, and often accompanied by tears, to which by constitution he was prone; thus Cumberland, from personal intimacy, describes the conversation of this man of genius. Even the temperate sensibility of HUME was touched by the bursts of feeling of ROUSSEAU; who, he says, "in conversation kindles often to a degree of heat which looks like inspiration." BARRY, that unhappy genius! was the most repulsive of men in his exterior. The vehemence of his language, the wildness of his glance, his habit of introducing vulgar oaths, which, by some unlucky association of habit, served him as expletives and interjections, communicated even a horror to some. A pious and a learned lady, who had felt intolerable uneasiness in his presence, did not however leave this man of genius that very evening without an impression that she had never heard so divine a man in her life. The conversation happening to turn on that principle of benevolence which pervades Christianity, and on the meekness of the Founder, it gave BARRY an opportunity of opening on the character of Jesus, with that copiousness of heart and mind, which once heard could never be forgotten. That artist indeed had long in his meditations an ideal head of Christ, which he was always talking of executing: "It is here!" he would cry, striking his head. That which baffled the invention, as we are told, of Leonardo da Vinci, who left his Christ headless, having exhausted his creative faculty among the apostles, this imaginative picture of the mysterious union of a divine and human nature, never ceased, even when conversing, to haunt the reveries of BARRY.

There are few authors and artists who are not eloquently instructive on that class of knowledge, or that department of art, which reveals the mastery of their life. Their conversations of this nature affect the mind to a distant period of life. Who, having listened to such, has forgotten what a man of genius has said at such moments? Who dwells not on the single thought, or the glowing expression, stamped in the heat of the moment, which came from its source? Then the mind of genius rises as the melody of the Æolian harp, when the winds suddenly sweep over the strings—it comes and goes—and leaves a sweetness beyond the harmonies of art.

The *Miscellanea* of POLITIAN are not only the result of his studies in the rich library of Lorenzo de' Medici, but of conversations, which had passed in those rides which Lorenzo, accompanied by Politian, preferred to the pomp of cavalcades. When the Cardinal de Cabassolle strayed with PETRARCH about his

valley in many a wandering discourse, they sometimes extended their walks to such a distance, that the servant sought them in vain to announce the dinner-hour, and found them returning in the evening. When HELVETIUS enjoyed the social conversation of a literary friend, he described it as "a chase of ideas." Such are the literary conversations which HORNE TOOKE alluded to, when he said "I assure you, we find more difficulty to finish than to begin our conversations."

The natural and congenial conversations of men of letters and of artists, must then be those which are associated with their pursuits, and these are of a different complexion with the talk of men of the world, the objects of which are drawn from the temporary passions of party-men, or the variable *on dits* of triflers—topics studiously rejected from these more tranquillising conversations. Diamonds can only be polished by their own dust, and are only shaped by the friction of other diamonds; and so it happens with literary men and artists.

A meeting of this nature has been recorded by CICERO, which himself and ATTICUS had with VARRO in the country. Varro arriving from Rome in their neighbourhood somewhat fatigued, had sent a messenger to his friends. "As soon as we had heard these tidings," says Cicero, "we could not delay hastening to see one, who was attached to us by the same pursuits and by former friendship." They set off, but found Varro half-way, urged by the same eager desire to join them. They conducted him to Cicero's villa. Here, while Cicero was inquiring after the news of Rome, Atticus interrupted the political rival of Cæsar, observing, "Let us leave off inquiring after things which cannot be heard without pain. Rather ask about what we know, for Varro's muses are longer silent than they used to be, yet surely he has not forsaken them, but rather conceals what he writes." —"By no means!" replied Varro, "for I deem him to be a whimsical man to write what he wishes to suppress. I have indeed a great work in hand (on the Latin language), long designed for Cicero." The conversation then took its natural turn by Atticus having got rid of the political anxiety of Cicero. Such, too, were the conversations which passed at the literary residence of the Medici family; which was described, with as much truth as fancy, as "the Lyceum of philosophy, the Arcadia of poets, and the Academy of painters." We have a pleasing instance of such a meeting of literary friends in those conversations which passed in POPE's garden, where there was often a remarkable union of nobility and literary men. There Thomson, Mallet, Gay, Hooke, and Glover, met Cobham, Bathurst, Chesterfield, Lyttelton, and other lords; there some of these poets found patrons, and POPE himself discovered critics.

The contracted views of Spence have unfortunately not preserved these literary conversations, but a curious passage has dropped from the pen of Lord BOLINGBROKE, in what his lordship calls "a letter to Pope," often probably passed over among his political tracts. It breathes the spirit of those delightful conversations. "My thoughts," writes his lordship, "in what order soever they flow, shall be communicated to you just *as they pass through my mind*; just as they used to be when *we conversed together* on these or any other subject; when *we sauntered alone*, or as we have often done with good Arbuthnot, and the jocose Dean of St. Patrick, among *the multiplied scenes of your little garden*. That theatre is large enough for my ambition." Such a scene opens a beautiful subject for a curious portrait-painter. These literary groups in the gardens of Pope, sauntering, or divided in confidential intercourse, would furnish a scene of literary repose and enjoyment, among some of the most illustrious names in our literature.

CHAPTER X.

Literary solitude.—Its necessity.—Its pleasures.—Of visitors by profession.—Its inconveniences.

THE literary character is reproached with an extreme passion for retirement, cultivating those insulating habits, which, while they are great interruptions, and even weakeners, of domestic happiness, induce at the same time in public life to a secession from its cares, and an avoidance of its active duties. Yet the vacancies of retired men are eagerly filled by the many unemployed men of the world more happily framed for its business. We do not hear these accusations raised against the painter who wears away his days at his easel, or the musician by the side of his instrument; and much less should we against the legal and the commercial character; yet all these are as much withdrawn from public and private life as the literary character. The desk is as insultating as the library. Yet the man who is working for his individual interest, is more highly estimated than the retired student, whose disinterested pursuits are at least more profitable to the world than to himself. La Bruyère discovered the world's erroneous estimate of literary labour: "There requires a better name," he says, "to be bestowed on the leisure (the idleness he calls it) of the literary character,—to meditate, to compose, to read and to be tranquil, should be called *working*." But so invisible is the progress of intellectual pursuits, and so rarely are the objects palpable to the observers,

that the literary character appears to be denied for his pursuits, what cannot be refused to every other. That unremitting application and unbroken series of their thoughts, admired in every profession, is only complained of in that one whose professors with so much sincerity mourn over the brevity of life, which has often closed on them while sketching their works.

It is, however, only in solitude that the genius of eminent men has been formed. There their first thoughts sprang, and there it will become them to find their last: for the solitude of old age—and old age must be often in solitude—may be found the happiest with the literary character. Solitude is the nurse of enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is the true parent of genius. In all ages solitude has been called for—has been flown to. No considerable work was ever composed, till its author, like an ancient magician, first retired to the grove, or to the closet, to invocate. When genius languishes in an irksome solitude among crowds, that is the moment to fly into seclusion and meditation. There is a society in the deepest solitude; in all the men of genius of the past

"First of your kind, Society divine!

and in themselves; for there only can they indulge in the romances of their soul, and there only can they occupy themselves in their dreams and their vigils, and, with the morning, fly without interruption to the labour they had reluctantly quitted. If there be not periods when they shall allow their days to melt harmoniously into each other, if they do not pass whole weeks together in their study, without intervening absences, they will not be admitted into the last recess of the Muses. Whether their glory come from researches, or from enthusiasm, Time, with not a feather ruffled on his wings, Time alone opens discoveries and kindles meditation. This desert of solitude, so vast and so dreary to the man of the world, to the man of genius is the magical garden of Armida, whose enchantments arose amidst solitude, while solitude was everywhere among those enchantments.

Whenever MICHAEL ANGELO, that "divine madman," as Richardson once wrote on the back of one his drawings, was meditating on some great design, he closed himself up from the world. "Why do you lead so solitary a life?" asked a friend. "Art," replied the sublime artist, "Art is a jealous god; it requires the whole and entire man." During his mighty labour in the Sistine Chapel, he refused to have any communication with any person even at his own house. Such undisturbed and solitary attention is demanded even by undoubted genius as the price of performance. How then shall we deem of that feebler

race who exult in occasional excellence, and who so often deceive themselves by mistaking the evanescent flashes of genius for that holier flame which burns on its altar, because the fuel is incessantly supplied?

We observe men of genius, in public situations, sighing for this solitude. Amidst the impediments of the world, they are doomed to view their intellectual banquet often rising before them, like some fairy delusion, never to taste it. The great VERULAM often complained of the disturbances of his public life, and rejoiced in the occasional retirement he stole from public affairs. "And now, because I am in the country, I will send you some of my country fruits, which with me are good meditations; when I am in the city, they are choked with business." Lord CLARENDON, whose life so happily combined the contemplative with the active powers of man, dwells on three periods of retirement which he enjoyed; he always took pleasure in relating the great tranquillity of spirit experienced during his solitude at Jersey, where for more than two years, employed on his History, he daily wrote "one sheet of large paper with his own hand." At the close of his life, his literary labours in his other retirements are detailed with a proud satisfaction. Each of his solitudes occasioned a new acquisition; to one he owed the Spanish, to another the French, and to a third the Italian literature. The public are not yet acquainted with the fertility of Lord Clarendon's literary labours. It was not vanity that induced Scipio to declare of solitude, that it had no loneliness for him, since, he voluntarily retired amidst a glorious life to his Linternum. CICERO was uneasy amid applauding Rome, and has distinguished his numerous works by the titles of his various villas. AULUS GELLIUS marked his solitude by his "Attic Nights." The "Golden Grove" of JEREMY TAYLOR is the produce of his retreat at the Earl of Carberry's seat in Wales; and the "Diversions of Purley" preserved a man of genius for posterity. VOLTAIRE had talents well adapted for society; but at one period of his life he passed five years in the most secret seclusion, and indeed usually lived in retirement. MONTESQUIEU quitted the brilliant circles of Paris for his books and his meditations, and was ridiculed by the gay triflers he deserted; "but my great work," he observes in triumph, "avance à pas de géant." HARRINGTON, to compose his "Oceana," severed himself from the society of his friends. DESCARTES, inflamed by genius, hires an obscure house in an unfrequented quarter at Paris, and there he passes two years, unknown to his acquaintance. ADAM SMITH, after the publication of his first work, withdrew into a retirement that lasted ten years: even Hume rallies him for separating himself from the world; but by this means the great political inqui-

rer satisfied the world by his great work. And thus it was with men of genius long ere PETRARCH withdrew to his Val chiusa.

The interruption of visitors by profession has been feelingly lamented by men of letters. The mind, maturing its speculations, feels the unexpected conversation of cold ceremony, chilling as March winds over the blossoms of the Spring. Those unhappy beings who wander from house to house, privileged by the charter of society to obstruct the knowledge they cannot impart, to weary because they are wearied, or to seek amusement at the cost of others, belong to that class of society which have affixed no other idea to time than that of getting rid of it. These are judges not the best qualified to comprehend the nature and evil of their depredations in the silent apartment of the studious, who may be often driven to exclaim, in the words of the Psalmist, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; *for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*"

When MONTESQUIEU was deeply engaged in his great work, he writes to a friend:—"The favour which your friend Mr. Hein often does me to pass his mornings with me, occasions great damage to my work as well by his impure French as the length of his details."—"We are afraid," said some of those visitors to BAXTER, "that we break in upon your time."—"To be sure you do," replied the disturbed and blunt scholar. To hint as gently as he could to his friends that he was avaricious of time, one of the learned Italians had a prominent inscription over the door of his study, intimating that whoever remained there must join in his labours. The amiable MELANCTHON, incapable of a harsh expression, when he received these idle visits, only noted down the time he had expended, that he might reanimate his industry, and not lose a day. EVELYN, continually importuned by morning visitors, or "taken up by other impertinencies of my life in the country," stole his hours from his night-rest "to redeem his losses." The literary character has been driven to the most inventive shifts to escape the irruption of a formidable party at a single rush, who enter, without "besieging or beseeching," as Milton has it. The late Mr. Ellis, a man of elegant tastes and poetical temperament, on one of these occasions, at his country-house, assured a literary friend, that when driven to the last, he usually made his escape by a leap out of the window; and Boileau has noticed a similar dilemma when at the villa of the President Lamoignon, while they were holding their delightful conversations in his grounds.

"Quelquefois de fâcheux arrivent trois volées,
Qui du parc à l'instant assiégent les allées;

Alors, sauve qui peut : et quatre fois heureux
Qui sait pour s'échapper quelque antre ignoré d'eux."

BRAND HOLLIS endeavoured to hold out "the idea of singularity as a shield;" and the great ROBERT BOYLE was compelled to advertise in a newspaper that he must decline visits on certain days, that he might have leisure to finish some of his works [1].

BOCCACCIO has given an interesting account of the mode of life of the studious PETRARCH, for on a visit he found that PETRARCH would not suffer his hours of study to be broken into even by the person whom of all men he loved most, and did not quit his morning studies for his guest, who during that time occupied himself by reading or transcribing the works of his master. At the decline of day Petrarch quitted his study for his garden, where he delighted to open his heart in mutual confidence.

But this solitude, at first a necessity, and then a pleasure, at length is not borne without repining. To tame the fervid wildness of youth to the strict regularities of study, is a sacrifice performed by the votary; but even MILTON appears to have felt this irksome period of life; for in the preface to Smectymnuus he says: —"It is but justice not to defraud of due esteem the *wearisome labours* and *studious watchings* wherein I have spent and *tired out* almost a whole youth." COWLEY, that enthusiast for seclusion, in his retirement calls himself "the Melancholy Cowley." I have seen an original letter of this poet to Evelyn, where he expresses his eagerness to see Sir George Mackenzies Essay on Solitude; for a copy of which he had sent over the town, without obtaining one, being "either all bought up, or burnt in the fire of London."—"I am the more desirous," he says, "because it is a subject in which I am most deeply interested." Thus COWLEY was requiring a book to confirm his predilection, and we know he made the experiment, which did not prove a happy one. We find even GIBBON, with all his fame about him, anticipating the dread he entertained of solitude in advanced life. "I feel, and shall continue to fell, that domestic solitude, however it may be alleviated by the world, by study, and even by friendship, is a comfortless state, which will grow more painful as I descend in the vale of years." And again:— "Your visit has only served to remind me that man, however amused or occupied in his closet, was not made to live alone."

Had the mistaken notions of Sprat not deprived us of COWLEY'S correspondence, we doubtless had viewed the picture of lonely genius touched by a tender pencil. But we have SHENSTONE, and GRAY, and SWIFT. The heart of SHENSTONE bleeds

[1] This curious advertisement is preserved in Dr. Birch's Life of Boyle, p. 272.

in the dead oblivion of solitude :—"Now I am come from a visit, every little uneasiness is sufficient to introduce my whole train of melancholy considerations, and to make me utterly dissatisfied with the life I now lead, and the life I foresee I shall lead. I am angry, and envious, and dejected, and frantic, and disregard all present things, as becomes a madman to do. I am infinitely pleased, though it is a gloomy joy, with the application of Dr. Swift's complaint, that he is forced to die in a rage, like a rat in a poisoned hole." Let the lover of solitude muse on its picture throughout the year, in this stanza, by the same amiable but suffering poet :—

Tedious again to curse the drizzling day,
Again to trace the wintry tracks of snow,
Or, soothed by vernal airs, again survey
The self-same hawthorns bud, and cowslips blow.

SWIFT'S letters paint with terrifying colours a picture of solitude; and at length his despair closed with idiotism. Even the playful muse of GRESSET throws a sombre querulousness over the solitude of men of genius :—

—— Je les vois, victimes du génie,
Au foible prix d'un éclat passager,
Vivre isolés, sans jouir de la vie!
Vingt ans d'ennuis pour quelques jours de gloire.

Such are the necessity, the pleasures, and the inconveniences of solitude! It ceases to be a question, whether men of genius should blend with the masses of society; for whether in solitude, or in the world, of all others they must learn to live with themselves. It is in the world that they borrow the sparks of thought that fly upwards and perish; but the flame of genius can only be lighted in their own solitary breast.

CHAPTER XI.

The meditations of genius.—A work on the art of meditation not yet produced.—Predisposing the mind.—Imagination awakens imagination.—Generating feelings by music.—Slight habits.—Darkness and silence, by suspending the exercise of our senses, increase the vivacity of our conceptions.—The arts of memory.—Memory the foundation of genius.—Inventions by several to preserve their own moral and literary character.—And to assist their studies.—The meditations of genius depend on habit.—Of the night-time.—A day of meditation should precede a day of composition.—Works of magnitude from slight conceptions.—Of thoughts never written.—The art of meditation exercised at all hours and places.—Continuity of attention the source of philosophical discoveries.—Stillness of meditation the first state of existence in genius.

A CONTINUITY of attention, a patient quietness of mind, forms one of the characteristics of genius. To think, and to feel, constitute the two grand divisions of men of genius—the men of

reasoning and the men of imagination. There is a thread in our thoughts, as there is a pulse in our hearts; he who can hold the one, knows how to think; and he who can move the other, knows how to feel.

A work on the art of meditation has not yet been produced; yet such a work might prove of immense advantage to him who never happened to have more than one solitary idea. The pursuit of a single principle has produced a great system. Thus probably we owe ADAM SMITH to the French economists. And a loose hint has conducted to a new discovery. Thus GIRARD, taking advantage of an idea first started by Fenelon, produced his "Synonymes." But while, in every manual art, every great workman improves on his predecessor, of the art of the mind, notwithstanding the facility of practice, and our incessant experience, millions are yet ignorant of the first rudiments; and men of genius themselves are rarely acquainted with the materials they are working on. Certain constituent principles of the mind itself, which the study of metaphysics curiously develops, offer many important regulations in this desirable art. We may even suspect, since men of genius in the present age have confided to us the secrets of their studies, that this art may be carried on by more obvious means than at first would appear, and even by mechanical contrivances and practical habits. A mind well organised may be regulated by a single contrivance, as by a bit of lead we govern the fine machinery by which we track the flight of time. Many secrets in this art of the mind yet remain as insulated facts, which may hereafter enter into an experimental history.

Johnson has a curious observation on the Mind itself. He thinks it obtains a stationary point, from whence it can never advance, occurring before the middle of life. "When the powers of nature have attained their intended energy, they can be no more advanced. The shrub can never become a tree. Nothing then remains but *practice* and *experience*; and perhaps *why they do so little, may be worth inquiry* [1]." The result of this inquiry would probably lay a broader foundation for this art of the mind than we have hitherto possessed. ADAM FERGUSON has expressed himself with sublimity:—"The lustre which man casts around him, like the flame of a meteor, shines only while his motion continues; the moments of rest and obscurity are the same." What is this art of meditation, but the power of withdrawing ourselves from the world, to view that world moving within ourselves, while we are in repose? As the

[1] I recommend the reader to turn to the whole passage, in Johnson's Letters to Mrs. Thrale. vol. i. p. 296.

artist, by an optical instrument, reflects and concentrates the boundless landscape around him, and patiently traces all nature in that small space.

There is a government of our thoughts. The mind of genius can be made to take a particular disposition or train of ideas. It is a remarkable circumstance in the studies of men of genius, that previous to composition they have often awakened their imagination by the imagination of their favourite masters. By touching a magnet, they became a magnet. A circumstance has been recorded of GRAY, by Mr. Mathias, "as worthy of all acceptation among the higher votaries of the divine art, when they are assured that Mr. Gray never sate down to compose any poetry without previously, and for a considerable time, reading the works of Spenser." But the circumstance was not unusual with Malherbe, Corneille, and Racine; and the most fervid verses of Homer, and the most tender of Euripides, were often repeated by Milton. Even antiquity exhibits the same exciting intercourse of the mind of genius. Cicero informs us how his eloquence caught inspiration from a constant study of the Latin and Grecian poetry; and it has been recorded of Pompey, who was Great even in his youth, that he never undertook any considerable enterprise, without animating his genius by having read to him the character of Achilles in the first Iliad; although he acknowledged that the enthusiasm he caught came rather from the poet than the hero. When BOSSUET had to compose a funeral oration, he was accustomed to retire for several days to his study, to ruminate over the pages of Homer; and when asked the reason of this habit, he exclaimed, in these lines,

> ——— magnam mihi mentem, animumque
> Delius inspiret Vates.

It is on the same principle of predisposing the mind, that many have first generated their feelings by the symphonies of music. ALFIERI often before he wrote prepared his mind by listening to music: "Almost all my tragedies were sketched in my mind either in the act of hearing music, or a few hours after,"—a circumstance which has been recorded of many others. Lord BACON had music often played in the room adjoining his study: MILTON listened to his organ for his solemn inspiration, and music was even necessary to WARBURTON. The symphonies which awoke in the poet sublime emotions, might have composed the inventive mind of the great critic in the visions of his theoretical mysteries. A celebrated French preacher, Bourdaloue or Massillon, was once found playing on a violin, to screw his mind up to the pitch, preparatory for his sermon,

which within a short interval he was to preach before the court. CURRAN'S favourite mode of meditation was with his violin in his hand; for hours together would he forget himself, running voluntaries over the strings, while his imagination in collecting its tones was opening all his faculties for the coming emergency at the bar. When LEONARDO DA VINCI was painting his Lisa, commonly called *La Joconde*, he had musicians constantly in waiting, whose light harmonies, by their associations, inspired feelings of

> "Tipsy dance and revelry."

There are slight habits which may be contracted by genius, which assist the action of the mind; but these are of a nature so trivial, that they seem ridiculous when they have not been experienced: but the imaginative race exist by the acts of imagination. HAYDN would never sit down to compose without being in full dress, with his great diamong ring, and the finest paper to write down his musical compositions. ROUSSEAU has told us, when occupied by his celebrated romance, of the influence of the rose-coloured knots of ribbon which tied his portfolio, his fine paper, his brilliant ink, and his gold sand. Similar facts are related of many. Whenever APOSTOLO ZENO, the predecessor of Metastasio, prepared himself to compose a new drama, he used to say to himsolf, *"Apostolo! recordati che questa è la prima opera che dai in luce."*——"Apostolo! remember that this is the first opera you are presenting to the public." We are scarcely aware how we may govern our thoughts by means of our sensations: DE LUC was subject to violent bursts of passion; but he calmed the interior tumult by the artifice of filling his mouth with sweets and comfits. When GOLDONI found his sleep disturbed by the obtrusive ideas still floating from the studies of the day, he contrived to lull himself to rest by conning in his mind a vocabulary of the Venetian dialect, translating some word into Tuscan and French; which being a very uninteresting occupation, at the third or fourth version this recipe never failed. This was an art of withdrawing attention from the greater to the less emotion; by which, as the interest weakened, the excitement ceased. MENDELSSOHN, whose feeble and too sensitive frame was often reduced to the last stage of suffering by intellectlectual exertion, when engaged in any point of difficulty, would in an instant contrive a perfect cessation from thinking, by mechanically going to the window, and counting the tiles upon the roof of his neighbour's house. Such facts show how much art may be concerned in the government of our thoughts.

It is an unquestionable fact, that some profound thinkers cannot pursue their intellectual operations amidst the distractions of

light and noise. With them, attention to what is passing within is interrupted by the discordant impressions from objects pressing and obtruding on the external senses. There are, indeed, instances, as in the case of Priestley and others, of authors who have pursued their literary works amidst conversation and their family; but such minds are not the most original thinkers, and the most refined writers; or their subjects are of a nature which require little more than judgment and diligence. It is the mind only in its fulness which can brood over thoughts till the incubation produces vitality. Such is the feeling in this act of study. In Plutarch's time they showed a subterraneous place of study built by Demosthenes, and where he often continued for two or three months together.—Malebranche, Hobbes, Corneille, and others, darkened their apartment, when they wrote, to concentrate their thoughts, as Milton says of the mind, "in the spacious circuits of her musing." It is in proportion as we can suspend the exercise of all our other senses that the liveliness of our conception increases—this is the observation of the most elegant metaphysician of our times; and when Lord Chesterfield advised that his pupil, whose attention wandered on every passing object, which unfitted him for study, should be instructed in a darkened apartment, he was aware of this principle; the boy would learn and retain what he learned ten times as well. We close our eyes whenever we would collect our mind together, or trace more distinctly an object which seems to have faded away in our recollections. The study of an author or an artist would be ill placed in the midst of a beautiful landscape; the Penseroso of Milton, "hid from day's garish eye," is the man of genius. A secluded and naked apartment, with nothing but a desk, a chair, and a single sheet of paper, was for fifty years the study of Buffon; the single ornament was a print of Newton placed before his eyes—nothing broke into the unity of his reveries. Cumberland's liveliest comedy, "the West Indian," was written in an unfurnished apartment close in front of an Irish turf-stack; and our comic writer was fully aware of the advantages of the situation. "In all my hours of study," says that elegant writer, "it has been through life my object so to locate myself as to have little or nothing to distract my attention, and therefore, brilliant rooms or pleasant prospects I have ever avoided. A dead wall, or as in the present case, an Irish turf-stack, are not attractions that can call off the fancy from its pursuits; and whilst in these pursuits it can find interest and occupation, it wants no outward aid to cheer it. My father I believe rather wondered at my choice." The principle ascertained, the consequences are obvious.

The arts of memory have at all times excited the attention of

the studious; they open a world of undivulged mysteries, where every one seems to form some discovery of his own, rather exciting his astonishment than enlarging his comprehension. LE SAGE, a modern philosopher, had a memory singularly defective. Incapable of acquiring languages, and deficient in all those studies which depend on the exercise of the memory, it became the object of his subsequent exertions to supply this deficiency by the order and method he observed in arranging every new fact or idea he obtained; so that in reality with a very bad memory, it appears that he was still enabled to recall at will any idea or any knowledge which he had stored up. JOHN HUNTER happily illustrated the advantages which every one derives from putting his thoughts in writing, "it resembles a tradesman taking stock; without which he never knows either what he possesses, or in what he is deficient." The late WILLIAM HUTTON, a man of an original cast of mind, as an experiment in memory, opened a book which he had divided into 365 columns, according to the days of the year: he resolved to try to recollect an anecdote, for every column, as insignificant and remote as he was able, rejecting all under ten years of age; and to his surprise he filled those spaces for small reminiscences, within ten columns; but till this experiment had been made, he never conceived the extent of his faculty. WOLF, the German metaphysician, relates of himself, that he had, by the most persevering habit, in bed and amidst darkness, resolved his algebraic problems, and geometrically composed all his methods merely by the aid of his imagination and memory; and when in the daytime he verified the one and the other of these operations, he had always found them true. Unquestionably such astonishing instances of a well-regulated memory depend on the practice of its art gradually formed, by frequent associations. When we reflect, that whatever we know, and whatever we feel, are the very smallest portions of all the knowledge we have been acquiring, and all the feelings we have experienced through life, how desirable would be that art, which should again open the scenes which have vanished, and revivify the emotions which other impressions have effaced? But the faculty of memory, although perhaps the most manageable of all others, is considered a subordinate one; it seems only a grasping and accumulating power, and in the work of genius is imagined to produce nothing of itself; yet is memory the foundation of Genius whenever this faculty is associated with imagination and passion; with men of genius it is a chronology not merely of events, but of emotions; hence they remember nothing that is not interesting to their feelings. Persons of inferior capacity have imperfect recollections from feeble impressions. Are not the incidents of the great novelist often

founded on the common ones of life; and the personages so admirably alive in his fictions, were they not discovered among the crowd? The ancients have described the Muses as the daughters of Memory; an elegant fiction, indicating the natural and intimate connexion between imagination and reminiscence.

The arts of memory will form a saving-bank of genius, to which it may have recourse, as a wealth which it can accumulate imperceptibly amidst the ordinary expenditure. LOCKE taught us the first rudiments of this art, when he showed us how he stored his thoughts and his facts, by an artificial arrangement; and Addison, before he commenced his Spectators, had amassed three folios of materials. But the higher step will be the volume which shall give an account of a man to himself, in which a single observation immediately becomes a clue of past knowledge, restoring to him his lost studies, and his evanescent existence. Self-contemplation makes the man more nearly entire: and to preserve the past, is half of immortality.

The worth of the diary must depend on the diarist; but "Of the things which concern himself," as MARCUS ANTONINUS entitles his celebrated work—this volume, reserved for solitary contemplation, should be considered as a future relic of ourselves. The late Sir SAMUEL ROMILLY commenced, even in the most occupied period of his life, a diary of his last twelve years; which he declares in his will, "I bequeath to my children, as it may be serviceable to them." Perhaps in this, Romilly bore in mind the example of another eminent lawyer, the celebrated WHITELOCKE, who had drawn up a great work, entitled "Remembrances of the Labours of WHITELOCKE, in the Annals of his Life, for the Instruction of his Children." That neither of these family books has appeared, is our common loss. Such legacies from such men, ought to become the inheritance of their countrymen.

To register the transactions of the day, with observations on what, and on whom, he had seen, was the advice of Lord KAIMES to the late Mr. CURWEN; and for years his head never reached its pillow without performing a task which habit had made easy. "Our best and surest road to knowledge," said Lord KAIMES, "is by profiting from the labours of others, and making their experience our own." In this manner CURWEN tells us he acquired by habit *the art of thinking*; and he is an able testimony of the practicability and success of the plan, for he candidly tells us, "Though many would sicken at the idea of imposing such a task upon themselves, yet the attempt, persevered in for a short time, would soon become a custom more irksome to omit, than it was difficult to commence."

Could we look into the libraries of authors, the studios of artists, and the laboratories of chemists, and view what they have only sketched, or what lie scattered in fragments, and could we trace their first and last thoughts, we might discover that we have lost more than we possess. There we might view foundations without superstructures, once the monuments of their hopes! A living architect recently exhibited to the public an extraordinary picture of his mind, in his "Architectural Visions of early fancy in the gay morning of youth," and which now were "dreams in the evening of life." In this picture he had thrown together all the architectural designs, his imagination had conceived, but which remained unexecuted. The feeling is true, however whimsical such unaccomplished fancies might appear, when thrown together into one picture. In literary history such instances have occurred but too frequently: the imagination of youth, measuring neither time nor ability, creates what neither time nor ability can execute. ADAM SMITH, in the preface to the first edition of his "Theory of Sentiments," announced a large work on law and government; and in a late edition he still repeated the promise, observing, that "Thirty years ago I entertained no doubt of being able to execute everything which it announced." The "Wealth of Nations" was but a fragment of this greater work. Surely men of genius, of all others, may mourn over length of art and the brevity of life!

Yet many glorious efforts, and even artificial inventions, have been contrived to assist and save its moral and literary existence in that perpetual race which genius holds with time. We trace its triumph in the studious days of such men as GIBBON, Sir WILLIAM JONES, and PRIESTLEY. An invention by which the moral qualities and the acquisitions of the literary character were combined and advanced together, is what Sir WILLIAM JONES ingeniously calls his "Andrometer." In that scale of human attainments and enjoyments which ought to accompany the eras of human life, it reminds us of what was to be learned, and what to be practised, assigning to stated periods their appropriate pursuits. An occasional recurrence, even to so fanciful a standard, would be like looking on a clock, to remind the student how he loiters, or how he advances in the great day's work. Such romantic plans have been often invented by the ardour of genius. There was no communication between Sir WILLIAM JONES and Dr. FRANKLIN; yet when young, the self-taught philosopher of America pursued the same genial and generous devotion to his own moral and literary excellence.

"It was about this time I conceived," says Franklin, "the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection," etc. He began a daily journal, in which against thirteen virtues ac-

companied by seven columns to mark the days of the week, he dotted down what he considered to be his failures; he found himself fuller of faults than he had imagined, but at length his blots diminished. This self-examination, or this "Faultbook," as Lord Shaftesbury would have called it, was always carried about him. These books still exist. An additional contrivance was that of journalising his twenty-four hours, of which he has furnished us both with descriptions and specimens of the method; and he closes with a solemn assurance, that "It may be well my posterity should be informed, that to this *little artifice* their ancestor owes the constant felicity of his life." Thus we see the fancy of JONES and the sense of FRANKLIN, unconnected either by character or communication, but acted on by the same glorious feeling to create their own moral and literary character, inventing similar although extraordinary methods.

The memorials of GIBBON and PRIESTLEY present us with the experience and the habits of the Literary Character. "What I have known," says Dr. Priestley, "with respect to myself, has tended much to lessen both my admiration and my contempt of others. Could we have entered into the mind of Sir Isaac Newton, and have traced all the steps by which he produced his great works, we might see nothing very extraordinary in the process." Our student, with an ingenuous simplicity, opens to us that "variety of mechanical expedients by which he secured and arranged his thoughts," and that discipline of the mind, by means of a peculiar arrangement of his studies for the day and for the year, in which he rivalled the calm and unalterable system pursued by GIBBON, BUFFON, and VOLTAIRE, who often only combined the knowledge they obtained by humble methods. They knew what to ask for; and where what is wanted may be found: they made use of an intelligent secretary; aware, as Lord BACON has expressed it, that some books "may be read by deputy."

BUFFON laid down an excellent rule to obtain originality, when he advised the writer first to exhaust his own thoughts, before he attempted to consult other writers; and GIBBON, the most experienced reader of all our writers, offers the same important advice to an author. When engaged on a particular subject, he tells us, "I suspended my perusal of any new book on the subject, till I had reviewed all that I knew, or believed, or had thought on it, that I might be qualified to discern how much the authors added to my original stock." The advice of Lord BACON, that we should pursue our studies in whatever disposition the mind may be, is excellent. If happily disposed, we shall gain a great step; and if indisposed, we "shall work out the knots and strands of the mind, and make the middle times the

more pleasant." Some active lives have passed away in incessant competition, like those of MOZART, CICERO, and VOLTAIRE, who were restless, perhaps unhappy, when their genius was quiescent. To such minds the constant zeal they bring to their labour supplies the absence of that inspiration which cannot always be the same, nor always at its height.

Industry is the feature by which the ancients so frequently describe an eminent character; such phrases as "*incredibili industria; diligentia singulari,*" are usual. We of these days cannot conceive the industry of CICERO; but he has himself told us that he suffered no moments of his leisure to escape from him. Not only his spare hours were consecrated to his books; but even on days of business he would take a few turns in his walk, to meditate or to dictate; many of his letters are dated before daylight, some from the senate, at his meals, and amid his morning levées. The dawn of day was the summons of study to Sir WILLIAM JONES, JOHN HUNTER, who was constantly engaged in the search and consideration of new facts, described what was passing in his mind by a remarkable illustration:—he said to Abernethy, "My mind is like a bee-hive." A simile which was singularly correct; "for," observes Abernethy, "in the midst of buz and apparent confusion, there was great order, regularity of structure, and abundant food, collected with incessant industry from the choicest stores of nature." Thus one man of genius is the ablest commentator on the thoughts and feelings of another. When we reflect on the magnitude of the labours of Cicero, and the elder Pliny, on those of Erasmus, Petrarch, Baronius, Lord Bacon, Usher, and Bayle, we seem at the base of these monuments of study, we seem scarcely awake to admire. These were the laborious instructors of mankind; their age has closed.

Yet let not those other artists of the mind, who work in the airy looms of fancy and wit, imagine that they are weaving their webs, without the direction of a principle, and without a secret habit which they have acquired, and which some have imagined, by its quickness and facility, to be an instinct. "Habit," says REID, "differs from instinct, not in its nature, but in its origin; the last being natural, the first acquired." What we are accustomed to do, gives a facility and proneness to do on like occasions; and there may be even an art, unperceived by themselves, in opening and pursuing a scene of pure invention, and even in the happiest turns of wit. One who had all the experience of such an artist has employed the very terms we have used, of "mechanical" and "habitual." "Be assured," says Goldsmith, "that wit is in some measure mechanical; and that a man long habituated to catch at even its resemblance, will at last be happy

enough to possess the substance. By a long habit of writing he acquires a justness of thinking, and a mastery of manner, which holiday writers, even with ten times his genius, may vainly attempt to equal." The wit of BUTLER was not extemporaneous, but painfully elaborated from notes which he incessantly accumulated; and the familiar *rime* of BERNI the burlesque poet, his existing manuscripts will prove, were produced by perpetual re-touches. Even in the sublime efforts of imagination, this art of meditation may be practised; and ALFIERI has shown us, that in those energetic tragic dramas which were often produced in a state of enthusiasm, he pursued a regulated process. "All my tragedies have been composed three times;" and he describes the three stages of conception, development, and versifying. "After these three operations, I proceed, like other authors, to polish, correct, or amend."

"All is habit in mankind, even virtue itself!" exclaimed METASTASIO; and we may add, even the meditations of genius. Some of its boldest conceptions are indeed fortuitous, starting up and vanishing almost in the perception; like that giant form, sometimes seen amidst the glaciers, afar from the opposite traveller, moving as he moves, stopping as he stops, yet, in a moment lost, and perhaps never more seen, although but his own reflection! Often in the still obscurity of the night, the ideas, the studies, the whole history of the day, is acted over again. There are probably few mathematicians who have not dreamed of an interesting problem, observes Professor Dugald Stewart. In these vivid scenes we are often so completely converted into spectators, that a great poetical contemporary of our country thinks that even his dreams should not pass away unnoticed, and keeps what he calls a register of nocturnals. TASSO has recorded some of his poetical dreams, which were often disturbed by waking himself in repeating a verse aloud, "This night I awaked with this verse in my mouth—

> "*E i duo che manda il nero adusto suolo.*"
> "The two, the *dark* and burning soil has sent."

He discovered that the epithet *black* was not suitable; "I again fell asleep, and in a dream I read in Strabo that the sand of Ethiopia and Arabia is extremely *white*, and this morning I have found the place. You see what learned dreams I have."

But incidents of this nature are not peculiar to this great bard. The *improvvisatori* poets, we are told, cannot sleep after an evening's effusion; the rhymes are still ringing in their ears, and imagination, if they have any, will still haunt them. Their previous state of excitement breaks into the calm of sleep; for, like the ocean, when its swell is subsiding, the waves still heave and

beat. A poet, whether a Milton or a Blackmore, will ever find that his muse will visit his "slumbers nightly." His fate is much harder than that of the great minister, Sir Robert Walpole, who on retiring to rest could throw aside his political intrigues with his clothes; but Sir Robert, to judge by his portrait, and anecdotes of him, had a sleekiness and good-humour, and an unalterable equanimity of countenance, not the portion of men of genius: indeed one of these has regretted that his sleep was so profound as not to be interrupted by dreams; from a throng of fantastic ideas he imagined that he could have drawn new sources of poetic imagery. The historian DE THOU was one of those great literary characters who, all his life, was preparing to write the history which he afterwards composed; omitting nothing, in his travels and his embassies, which went to the formation of a great man, DE THOU has given a very curious account of his dreams. Such was his passion for study, and his ardent admiration of the great men whom he conversed with, that he often imagined in his sleep that he was travelling in Italy, Germany, and in England, where he saw and consulted the learned, and examined their curious libraries. He had all his lifetime these literary dreams, but more particularly in his travels they reflected these images of the day.

If memory do not chain down these hurrying fading children of the imagination, and

> "Snatch the faithless fugitives to light."

with the beams of the morning, the mind suddenly finds itself forsaken and solitary. ROUSSEAU has uttered a complaint on this occasion. Full of enthusiasm, he devoted to the subject of his thoughts, as was his custom, the long sleepless intervals of his nights. Meditating in bed with his eyes closed, he turned over his periods in a tumult of ideas; but when he rose and had dressed, all was vanished; and when he sat down to his papers, he had nothing to write. Thus genius has its vespers and its vigils, as well as its matins, which we have been so often told are the true hours of its inspiration; but every hour may be full of inspiration for him who knows to meditate. No man was more practised in this art of the mind than POPE, and even the night was not an unregarded portion of his poetical existence, not less than with LEONARDO DA VINCI, who tells us how often he found the use of recollecting the ideas of what he had considered in the day after he had retired to bed, encompassed by the silence and obscurity of the night. Sleepless nights are the portion of genius when engaged in its work; the train of reasoning is still pursued; the images of fancy catch a fresh illumination; and even a happy expression shall linger in the ear of him

who turns about for the soft composure to which his troubled spirit cannot settle.

But while with genius so much seems fortuitous, in its great operations the march of the mind appears regular, and requires preparation. The intellectual faculties are not always coexistent, or do not always act simultaneously. Whenever any particular faculty is highly active, while the others are languid, the work, as a work of genius, may be very deficient. Hence the faculties, in whatever degree they exist, are unquestionably enlarged by *meditation*. It seems trivial to observe that meditation should precede composition, but we are not always aware of its importance; the truth is, that it is a difficulty unless it be a habit. We write, and we find we have written ill; we re-write, and feel we have written well: in the second act of composition we have acquired the necessary meditation. Still we rarely carry on our meditation so far as its practice would enable us. Many works of mediocrity might have approached to excellence, had this art of the mind been exercised. Many volatile writers might have reached even to deep thinking, had they bestowed a day of meditation before a day of composition, and thus engendered their thoughts. Many productions of genius have originally been enveloped in feebleness and obscurity, which have only been brought to perfection by repeated acts of the mind. There is a maxim of Confucius, which in the translation seems quaint, but which is pregnant with sense—

> "Labour, but slight not meditation;
> Meditate, but slight not labour."

Few works of magnitude presented themselves at once, in their extent and with their associations, to their authors. Two or three striking circumstances, unobserved before, are perhaps all which the man of genius perceives. It is in revolving the subject that the whole mind becomes gradually agitated; as a summer landscape, at the break of day, is wrapt in mist: at first, the sun strikes on a single object, but the light and warmth increasing, the whole scene glows in the noonday of imagination. How beautifully this state of the mind, in the progress of composition, is described by DRYDEN, alluding to his work, "when it was only a confused mass of thoughts, tumbling over one another in the dark; when the fancy was yet in its first work, moving the sleeping images of things towards the light, there to be distinguished, and then either to be chosen or rejected, by the judgment!" At that moment, he adds, "I was in that eagerness of imagination which, by over-pleasing fanciful men, flatters them into the danger of writing." GIBBON tells us of his history, "At the onset, all was dark and doubtful; even the title of the

work, the true era of the decline and fall of the empire, etc. I was often tempted to cast away the labour of seven years." WINCKELMAN was long lost in composing his "History of Art;" a hundred fruitless attempts were made, before he could discover a plan amidst the labyrinth. Slight conceptions kindle finished works. A lady asking for a few verses on rural topics of the Abbé De Lille, his specimens pleased, and sketches heaped on sketches produced "Les Jardins." In writing the "Pleasures of Memory," as it happened with "The Rape of the Lock," the poet at first proposed a simple description in a few lines, till conducted by meditation the perfect composition of several years closed in that fine poem. That still valuable work, *L'Art de Penser* of the Port-Royal, was originally projected to teach a young nobleman all that was practically useful in the art of logic in a few days, and was intended to have been written in one morning by the great ARNAULD; but to that profound thinker so many new ideas crowded in that slight task, that he was compelled to call in his friend NICOLLE; and thus a few projected pages closed in a volume so excellent, that our elegant metaphysician has recently declared, that "it is hardly possible to estimate the merits too highly." Pemberton, who knew NEWTON intimately, informs us that his treatise on Natural Philosophy, full of a variety of profound inventions, was composed by him from scarcely any other materials than the *few propositions he had set down several years before,* and which having resumed, occupied him in writing one year and a half. A curious circumstance has been preserved in the life of the other immortal man in philosophy, Lord BACON. When young, he wrote a letter to Father Fulgentio concerning an Essay of his, to which he gave the title of "The greatest Birth of Time," a title which he censures as too pompous. The Essay itself is lost, but it was the first outline of that great design which he afterwards pursued and finished in his "Instauration of the Sciences." LOCKE himself has informed us, that his great work on "the Human Understanding," when he first put pen to paper, he thought "would have been contained in one sheet, but that the farther he went on, the larger prospect he had." In this manner it would be beautiful to trace the history of the human mind, and observe how a NEWTON and a BACON and a LOCKE were proceeding for thirty years together, in accumulating truth upon truth, and finally building up these fabrics of their invention.

Were it possible to collect some thoughts of great thinkers, which were never written, we should discover vivid conceptions, and an originality they never dared to pursue in their works! Artists have this advantage over authors, that their virgin fancies, their chance felicities, which labour cannot after-

wards produce, are constantly perpetuated; and these "studies," as they are called, are as precious to posterity as their more complete designs. In literature we possess one remarkable evidence of these fortuitous thoughts of genius. POPE and SWIFT, being in the country together, observed, that if contemplative men were to notice "the thoughts which suddenly present themselves to their minds when walking in the fields, etc., they might find many as well worth preserving as some of their more deliberate reflections." They made a trial, and agreed to write down such involuntary thoughts as occurred during their stay there. These furnished out the "Thoughts" in Pope's and Swift's Miscellanies[1]. Among Lord Bacon's Remains, we find a paper entitled "*Sudden thoughts,* set down for profit." At all hours, by the side of VOLTAIRE's bed, or on his table, stood his pen and ink with slips of paper. The margins of his books were covered with his "sudden thoughts." CICERO, in reading, constantly took notes and made comments. There is an art of reading, as well as an art of thinking, and an art of writing.

The art of meditation may be exercised at all hours, and in all places; and men of genius, in their walks, at table, and amidst assemblies, turning the eye of the mind inwards, can form an artificial solitude; retired amidst a crowd, calm amidst distraction, and wise amidst folly. When DOMENICHINO was reproached for his dilatory habits, in not finishing a great picture for which he had contracted, his reply described this method of study: *Eh! Io la sto continuamente dipingendo entro di me*—I am continually painting it within myself. HOGARTH, with an eye always awake to the ridiculous, would catch a character on his thumb-nail. LEONARDO DA VINCI has left a great number of little books which he usually carried in his girdle, that he might instantly sketch whatever he wished to recal to his recollections; and Amoretti discovered, that, in these light sketches, this fine genius was forming a system of physiognomy which he frequently inculcated to his pupils. HAYDN carefully noted down in a pocket-book the passages and ideas which came to him in his walks or amid company. Some of the great actions of men of this habit of mind were first meditated on amidst the noise of a convivial party, or the music of a concert. The victory of Waterloo might have been organised in the ball-room at Brussels; and thus RODNEY, at the table of Lord Sandwich, while the bottle was briskly circulating, being observed arranging bits of cork, and his solitary amusement having excited inquiry,

[1] This anecdote is found in Ruffhead's Life of Pope, evidently given by Warburton, as was everything of personal knowledge in that tasteless volume of a mere lawyer, who presumed to write the life of a poet.

said that he was practising a plan to annihilate an enemy's fleet. This proved to be that discovery of breaking the line, which the happy audacity of the hero afterwards executed. What situation is more common than a sea-voyage, where nothing presents itself to the reflections of most men than irksome observations on the desert of waters? But the constant exercise of the mind by habitual practice is the privilege of a commanding genius; and, in a similar situation, we discover CICERO and Sir WILLIAM JONES acting alike. Amidst the Oriental seas, in a voyage of 12,000 miles, the mind of JONES kindled with delightful enthusiasm, and he has perpetuated those elevating feelings in his discourse to the Asiatic Society; so CICERO on board a ship, sailing slowly along the coast, passing by a town where his friend Trebatius resided, wrote a work which the other had expressed a wish to possess, and of which wish the view of the town had reminded him.

To this habit of continuity of attention, tracing the first simple idea to its remoter consequences, the philosophical genius owes many of its discoveries. It was one evening in the cathedral of Pisa, that GALILEO observed the vibrations of a brass lustre pendent from the vaulted roof, which had been left swinging by one of the vergers. The habitual meditation of genius combined with an ordinary accident a new idea of science, and hence conceived the invention of measuring time by the medium of a pendulum. Who but a genius of this order, sitting in his orchard, and observing the descent of an apple, could have discovered a new quality in matter, and have ascertained the laws of attraction, by perceiving that the same causes might perpetuate the regular motions of the planetary system; who, but a genius of this order, while viewing boys blowing soap-bladders, could have discovered the properties of light and colours, and then anatomised a ray? FRANKLIN, on board a ship, observing a partial stillness in the waves when they threw down water which had been used for culinary purposes, by the same principle of meditation was led to the discovery of the wonderful property in oil of calming the agitated ocean; and many a ship has been preserved in tempestuous weather, or a landing facilitated on a dangerous surf, by this solitary meditation of genius.

Thus meditation draws out of the most simple truths the strictness of philosophical demonstration; converting even the amusements of schoolboys, or the most ordinary domestic occurrences, into the principle of a new science. The phenomenon of galvanism was familiar to students; yet was there but one man of genius who could take advantage of an accident, give it his name, and fix it as a science. It was while lying in his bath, but still meditating on the means to detect the fraud of the

goldsmith who had made Hiero's crown, that the most extraordinary philosopher of antiquity was led to the investigation of a series of propositions demonstrated in the two books of ARCHIMEDES, *De insidentibus in fluido*, still extant; and which a great mathematician admires both for the strictness and elegance of the demonstrations. To as minute a domestic occurrence as GALVANI'S we owe the steam-engine. When the Marquis of WORCESTER was a state prisoner in the Tower, he one day observed, while his meal was preparing in his apartment, that the cover of the vessel being tight, was, by the expansion of the steam, suddenly forced off, and driven up the chimney. His inventive mind was led on in a train of thought with reference to the practical application of steam as a first mover. His observations, obscurely exhibited in his "Century of Inventions," were successively wrought out by the meditations of others, and an incident, to which one can hardly make a formal reference without a risible emotion, terminated in the noblest instance of mechanical power.

Into the stillness of meditation the mind of genius must be frequently thrown; it is a kind of darkness which hides from us all surrounding objects, even in the light of day. This is the first state of existence in genius. In Cicero's "Treatise on Old Age," we find Cato admiring Caius Sulpitius Gallus, who when he sat down to write in the morning, was surprised by the evening; and when he took up his pen in the evening, was surprised by the appearance of the morning. SOCRATES sometimes remained a whole day in immovable meditation, his eyes and countenance directed to one spot, as if in the stillness of death. LA FONTAINE, when writing his comic tales, has been observed early in the morning and late in the evening in the same recumbent posture under the same tree. This quiescent state is a sort of enthusiasm, and renders everything that surrounds us as distant as if an immense interval separated us from the scene. Poggius has told us of DANTE, that he indulged his meditation more strongly than any man he knew; for when deeply busied in reading, he seemed to live only in his ideas. Once the poet went to view a public procession; having entered a bookseller's shop, and taken up a book, he sunk into a reverie; on his return he declared that he had neither seen nor heard a single occurrence in the public exhibition, which had passed unobserved before him. It has been told of a modern astronomer, that one summer night, when he was withdrawing to his chamber the brightness of the heavens showed a phenomenon: he passed the whole night in observing it; and when they came to him early in the morning, and found him in the same attitude, he said, like one who had been recollecting his thoughts for a few moments, "It

must be thus; but I'll go to bed before it is late." He had gazed the entire night in meditation, and was not aware of it. Abernethy has finely painted the situation of NEWTON in this state of mind. I will not change his words, for his words are his feelings. "It was this power of mind—which can contemplate the greatest number of facts or propositions with accuracy—that so eminently distinguished NEWTON from other men. It was this power that enabled him to arrange the whole of a treatise in his thoughts before he committed a single idea to paper. In the exercise of this power, he was known occasionally to have passed a whole night or day, entirely inattentive to surrounding objects."

There is nothing incredible in the stories related of some who have experienced this entranced state in study, where the mind, deliciously inebriated with the object it contemplates, feels nothing, from the excess of feeling, as a philosopher well describes it. The impressions from our exterior sensations are often suspended by great mental excitement. ARCHIMEDES, involved in the investigation of mathematical truth, and the painters PROTOGENES and PARMEGGIANO, found their senses locked up as it were in meditation, so as to be incapable of withdrawing themselves from their work, even in the midst of the terrors and storming of the place by the enemy. MARINO was so absorbed in the composition of his "Adonis," that he suffered his leg to be burned before the painful sensation grew stronger than the intellectual pleasure of his imagination. Monsieur THOMAS, a modern French writer, and an intense thinker, would sit for hours against a hedge, composing with a low voice, taking the same pinch of snuff for half an hour together, without being aware that it had long disappeared. When he quitted his apartment, after prolonging his studies there, a visible alteration was observed in his person, and the agitation of his recent thoughts was still traced in his air and manner. With eloquent truth BUFFON described those reveries of the student, which compress his day, and mark the hours by the sensations of minutes! "Invention depends on patience: contemplate your subject long; it will gradually unfold till a sort of electric spark convulses for a moment the brain, and spreads down to the very heart a glow of irritation. Then come the luxuries of genius, the true hours for production and composition; hours so delightful, that I have spent twelve or fourteen successively at my writing-desk, and still been in a state of pleasure." Bishop HORNE, whose literary feelings were of the most delicate and lively kind, has beautifully recorded them in his progress through a favourite and lengthened work—his Commentary on the Psalms. He alludes to himself in the third person; yet who but the self-

painter could have caught those delicious emotions which are so evanescent in the deep occupation of pleasant studies? "He arose fresh in the morning to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it; and he can truly say, that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every part improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last, for then he grieved that his work was done."

This eager delight of pursuing study, this impatience of interruption, and this exultation in progress, are alike finely described by MILTON in a letter to his friend Diodati.

"Such is the character of my mind, that no delay, none of the ordinary cessations for rest or otherwise, I had nearly said, care or thinking of the very subject, can hold me back from being hurried on to the destined point, and from completing the great circuit, as it were, of the study in which I am engaged."

Such is the picture of genius viewed in the stillness of MEDITATION; but there is yet a more excited state, when, as if consciousness were mixing with its reveries, in the illusion of a scene, of a person, of a passion, the emotions of the soul effect even the organs of sense. This excitement is experienced when the poet in the excellence of invention, and the philosopher in the force of intellect, alike share in the hours of inspiration and the ENTHUSIASM of genius.

CHAPTER XII.

The enthusiasm of Genius.—A state of mind resembling a waking dream distinct from reverie.—The ideal presence distinguished from the real presence.—The senses are really affected in the ideal world, proved by a variety of instances.—Of the rapture or sensation of deep study in art, in science, and literature.—Of perturbed feelings in delirium.—In extreme endurance of attention.—And in visionary illusions.—Enthusiasts in literature and art—of their self-immolations.

WE left the man of genius in the stillness of meditation. We have now to pursue his history through that more excited state which occurs in the most active operations of genius, and which the term *reverie* inadequately indicates. Metaphysical distinctions but ill describe it, and popular language affords no terms for those faculties and feelings which escape the observation of the multitude not affected by the phenomenon.

The illusion produced by a drama on persons of great sensibility, when all the senses are awakened by a mixture of reality with imagination, is the effect experienced by men of genius in in their own vivified ideal world. Real emotions are raised by fiction. In a scene, apparently passing in their presence, where the whole train of circumstances succeeds in all the continuity

of nature, and where a sort of real existences appear to rise up before them, they themselves become spectators or actors. Their sympathies are excited, and the exterior organs of sense are visibly affected—they even break out into speech, and often accompany their speech with gestures.

In this equivocal state the enthusiast of genius produces his master-pieces. This waking dream is distinct from reverie, where, our thoughts wandering without connexion, the faint impressions are so evanescent as to occur without even being recollected. A day of *reverie* is beautifully painted by Rousseau as distinct from a day of *thinking:* "J'ai des journées délicieuses, errant sans souci, sans projet, sans affaire, de bois en bois, et de rocher en rocher, *rêvant toujours et ne pensant point.*" Far different, however, is one closely-pursued act of meditation, carrying the enthusiast of genius beyond the precinct of actual existence. The act of contemplation then creates the thing contemplated. He is now the busy actor in a world which he himself only views; alone, he hears, he sees, he touches, he laughs, he weeps; his brows and lips, and his very limbs move.

Poets and even painters, who, as Lord Bacon describes witches, "are imaginative," have often involuntarily betrayed, in the act of composition, those gestures which accompany this enthusiasm. Witness Domenichino enraging himself, that he might portray anger. Nor were these creative gestures quite unknown to Quintilian, who has nobly compared them to the lashings of the lion's tail, rousing him to combat. Actors of genius have accustomed themselves to walk on the stage for an hour before the curtain was drawn, that they might fill their minds with all the phantoms of the drama, and so suspend all communion with the external world. The great actress of our age, during representation, always had the door of her dressing-room open, that she might listen to, and if possible watch the whole performance, with the same attention as was experienced by the spectators. By this means she possessed herself of all the illusion of the scene; and when she herself entered on the stage, her dreaming thoughts then brightened into a vision, where the perceptions of the soul were as firm and clear as if she were really the Constance or the Katherine whom she only represented [1].

Aware of this peculiar faculty, so prevalent in the more vivid exercise of genius, Lord Kaimes seems to have been the first who, in a work on criticism, attempted to name *the ideal pre-*

[1] The late Mrs. Siddons. She herself communicated this striking circumstance to me.

sence, to distinguish it from the *real presence* of things. It has been called the representative faculty, the imaginative state, and many other states and faculties. Call it what we will, no term opens to us the invisible mode of its operations, no metaphysical definition expresses its variable nature. Conscious of the existence of such a faculty, our critic perceived that the conception of it is by no means clear when described in words.

Has not the difference between an actual thing, and its image in a glass, perplexed some philosophers? and it is well known how far the ideal philosophy has been carried by so fine a genius as Bishop BERKLEY. "All are pictures, alike painted on the retina, or optical sensorium!" exclaimed the enthusiast BARRY, who only saw pictures in nature, and nature in pictures. This faculty has had a strange influence over the passionate lovers of statues. We find unquestionable evidence of the vividness of the representative faculty, or the ideal presence, vying with that of reality. EVELYN has described one of this cast of mind, in the librarian of the Vatican, who haunted one of the finest collections at Rome. To these statues he would frequently talk as if they were living persons, often kissing and embracing them. A similar circumstance might be recorded of a man of distinguished talent and literature among ourselves. Wondrous stories are told of the amatorial passion for marble statues; but the wonder ceases, and the truth is established, when the irresistible ideal presence is comprehended; the visions which now bless these lovers of statues, in the modern land of sculpture, Italy, had acted with equal force in ancient Greece. "The Last Judgment," the stupendous ideal presence of MICHAEL ANGELO, seems to have communicated itself to some of his beholders: "As I stood before this picture," a late traveller tells us, "my blood chilled as if the reality were before me, and the very sound of the trumpet seemed to pierce my ears."

Cold and barren tempers without imagination, whose impressions of objects never rise beyond those of memory and reflection, which know only to compare, and not to excite, will smile at this equivocal state of the ideal presence; yet it is a real one to the enthusiast of genius, and it is his happiest and peculiar condition. Destitute of this faculty, no metaphysical aid, no art to be taught him, no mastery of talent, will avail him; unblest with it, the votary will find each sacrifice lying cold on the altar, for no accepting flame from heaven shall kindle it.

This enthusiasm indeed can only be discovered by men of genius themselves; yet when most under its influence, they can least perceive it, as the eye which sees all things cannot view itself; or rather such an attempt would be like searching for the principle of life, which were it found would cease to be life.

From an enchanted man we must not expect a narrative of his enchantment; for if he could speak to us reasonably, and like one of ourselves in that case he would be a man in a state of disenchantment, and then would perhaps yield us no better account than we may trace by our own observations.

There is however something of reality in this state of the ideal presence; for the most familiar instances will show how the nerves of each external sense are put in motion by the idea of the object, as if the real object had been presented to it. The difference is only in the degree. The senses are more concerned in the ideal world than at first appears. The idea of a thing will make us shudder; and the bare imagination of it will often produce a real pain. A curious consequence may be deduced from this principle; MILTON, lingering amid the freshness of nature in Eden, felt all the delights of those elements which he was creating; his nerves moved with the images which excited them. The fierce and wild DANTE, amidst the abysses of his Inferno, must often have been startled by its horrors, and often left his bitter and gloomy spirit in the stings he inflicted on the great criminal. The movable nerves then of the man of genius are a reality; he sees, he hears, he feels by each. How mysterious to us is the operation of this faculty!

A HOMER and a RICHARDSON [1], like nature, open a volume large as life itself—embracing a circuit of human existence! This state of the mind has even a reality in it for the generality of persons. In a romance or a drama, tears are often seen in the eyes of the reader or the spectator, who, before they have time to recollect that the whole is fictitious, have been surprised for a moment by a strong conception of a present and existing scene.

Can we doubt of the reality of this faculty, when the visible and outward frame of the man of genius bears witness to its presence? When FIELDING said, "I do not doubt but the most pathetic and affecting scenes have been writ with tears," he probably drew that discovery from an inverse feeling to his own. Fielding would have been gratified to have confirmed the observation by facts which never reached him. METASTASIO, in writing the ninth scene of the second act of his "Olympiad," found himself suddenly moved—shedding tears. The imagined sorrows had inspired real tears; and they afterwards proved contagious. Had our poet not perpetuated his surprise by an

[1] Richardson assembles a family about him, writing down what they said, seeing their very manner of saying, living with them as often and as long as he wills—with such a personal unity, that an ingenious lawyer once told me that he required no stronger evidence of a fact in any court of law than a circumstantial scene in Richardson.

interesting sonnet, the circumstance had passed away with the emotion, as many such have. POPE could never read Priam's speech for the loss of his son, without tears, and frequently has been observed to weep over tender and melancholy passages. ALFIERI, the most energetic poet of modern times, having composed, without a pause, the whole of an act, noted in the margin —"Written under a paroxysm of enthusiasm, and while shedding a flood of tears." The impressions which the frame experiences in this state, leave deeper traces behind them than those of reverie. A circumstance accidentally preserved, has informed us of the tremors of DRYDEN, after having written that ode[1], which, as he confessed, he had pursued without the power of quitting it; but these tremors were not unusual with him—for in the preface to his Tales, he tells us, that "in translating Homer he found greater pleasure than in Virgil; but it was not a pleasure without pain; the continual agitation of the spirits must needs be a weakener to any constitution, especially in age, and many pauses are required for refreshment betwixt the heats."

We find METASTASIO, like others of the brotherhood, susceptible of this state, complaining of his sufferings during the poetical æstus. "When I apply with attention, the nerves of my sensorium are put into a violent tumult; I grow as red as a drunkard, and am obliged to quit my work." When BUFFON was absorbed on a subject which presented great objections to his opinions, he felt his head burn, and saw his countenance flushed; and this was a warning for him to suspend his attention. GRAY could never compose voluntarily; his genius resembled the armed apparition in Shakespeare's master-tragedy. "He would not be commanded." When he wished to compose the Installation Ode, for a considerable time he felt himself without the power to begin it: a friend calling on him, GRAY flung open his door hastily, and in a hurried voice and tone, exclaiming in the first verse of that ode,

"Hence, avaunt! 'tis holy ground!"—

his friend started at the disordered appearance of the bard, whose orgasm had disturbed his very air and countenance.

Listen to one labouring with all the magic of the spell. Madame ROLAND has thus powerfully described the ideal presence in her first readings of Telemachus and Tasso:—"My respiration rose, I felt a rapid fire colouring my face, and my voice

[1] This famous and unparalleled ode was probably afterwards retouched; but Joseph Warton discovered in it the rapidity of the thoughts, and the glow and the expressiveness of the images; which are the certain marks of the *first sketch* of a master.

changing had betrayed my agitation. I was Eucharis for Telemachus, and Erminia for Tancred. However, during this perfect transformation, I did not yet think that I myself was anything, for any one: the whole had no connexion with myself. I sought for nothing around me; I was they; I saw only the objects which existed for them; it was a dream, without being awakened."

The description, which so calm and exquisite an investigator of taste and philosophy as our sweet and polished REYNOLDS has given of himself at one of these moments, is too rare not to be recorded in his own words. Alluding to the famous Transfiguration, our own RAFFAELLE says, "When I have stood looking at that picture from figure to figure, the eagerness, the spirit, the close unaffected attention of each figure to the principal action, my thoughts have carried me away, that I have forgot myself; and for that time might be looked upon as an enthusiastic madman; for I could really fancy the whole action was passing before my eyes."

The effect which the study of Plutarch's Illustrious Men produced on the mighty mind of ALFIERI, during a whole winter, while he lived as it were among the heroes of antiquity, he has himself described. ALFIERI wept and raved with grief and indignation that he was born under a government, which favoured no Roman heroes and sages. As often as he was struck with the great deeds of these great men, in his extreme agitation he rose from his seat as one possessed. The feeling of genius in ALFIERI was suppressed for more than twenty years, by the discouragement of his uncle: but as the natural temperament cannot be crushed out of the soul of genius, he was a poet without writing a single verse; and as a great poet, the ideal presence at times became ungovernable, verging to madness. In traversing the wilds of Arragon his emotions would certainly have given birth to poetry, could he have expressed himself in verse. It was a complete state of the imaginative existence, or this ideal presence; for he proceeded along the wilds of Arragon in a reverie, weeping and laughing by turns. He considered this as a folly, because it ended in nothing but in laughter and tears. He was not aware that he was then yielding to a demonstration, could he have judged of himself, that he possessed those dispositions of mind and that energy of passion which form the poetical character.

Genius creates by a single conception; the statuary conceives the statue at once, which he afterwards executes by the slow process of art; and the architect contrives a whole palace in an instant. In a single principle, opening as it were on a sudden to genius, a great and new system of things is discovered. It has

happened, sometimes, that this single conception, rushing over the whole concentrated spirit, has agitated the frame convulsively. It comes like a whispered secret from Nature. When MALEBRANCHE first took up Descartes's Treatise on Man, the germ of his own subsequent philosophic system, such was his intense feeling, that a violent palpitation of the heart, more than once, obliged him to lay down the volume. When the first idea of the "Essay on the Arts and Sciences" rushed on the mind of ROUSSEAU, a feverish symptom in his nervous system approached to a slight delirium. Stopping under an oak, he wrote with a pencil the Prosopopeia of Fabricius—"I still remember my solitary transport at the discovery of a philosophical argument against the doctrine of transubstantiation," exclaimed GIBBON in his Memoirs.

This quick sensibility of genius has suppressed the voice of poets in reciting their most pathetic passages.—THOMSON was so oppressed by a passage in Virgil or Milton when he attempted to read, that "his voice sunk in ill-articulated sounds from the bottom of his breast." The tremulous figures of the ancient Sybil appear to have been viewed in the land of the Muses, by the energetic description which Paulus Jovius gives us, of the impetus and afflatus of one of the Italian improvvisatori, some of whom, I have heard from one present at a similar exhibition, have not degenerated in poetic inspiration, nor in its corporeal excitement. "His eyes fixed downwards, kindle, as he gives utterance to his effusions, the moist drops flow down his cheeks, the veins of his forehead swell, and wonderfully his learned ear, as it were, abstracted and intent, moderates each impulse of his flowing numbers [1]."

This enthusiasm throws the man of genius amid Nature, into absorbing reveries when the senses of other men are overcome at the appearance of destruction; he continues to view only Nature herself. The mind of PLINY, to add one more chapter to his might scroll, sought Nature amidst the volcano in which he perished. VERNET was on board a ship in a raging tempest where all hope was given up. The astonished captain beheld the artist of genius, his pencil in his hand, in calm enthusiasm, sketching the terrible world of waters—studying the wave that was rising to devour him.

There is a tender enthusiasm in the elevated studies of antiquity. Then the ideal presence or the imaginative existence prevails, by its perpetual associations, or as the late Dr. Brown has

[1] The passage is curious.—"Canenti defixi exardent oculi, sudores manant, frontis venæ contumescunt, et quod mirum est, eruditæ aures, tanquam alienæ et intentæ, omnem impetum profluentium numerorum exactissimâ ratione moderantur."

perhaps more distinctly termed them, *suggestions*. "In contemplating antiquity, the mind itself becomes antique," was finely observed by Livy, long ere our philosophy of the mind existed as a system. This rapture, or sensation of deep study, has been described by one whose imagination had strayed into the occult learning of antiquity, and in the hymns of Orpheus, it seemed to him that he had lifted the veil from Nature. His feelings were associated with her loneliness. I translate his words. "When I took these dark mystical hymns into my hands, I appeared as it were to be descending into an abyss of the mysteries of venerable antiquity; at that moment, the world in silence and the stars and moon only, watching me." This enthusiasm is confirmed by Mr. Mathias, who applies this description to his own emotions on his first opening the manuscript volumes of the poet Gray on the philosophy of Plato; "and many a learned man," he adds, "will acknowledge as his own, the feelings of this animated scholar."

Amidst the monuments of great and departed nations, our imagination is touched by the grandeur of local impressions, and the vivid associations, or suggestions, of the manners, the arts, and the individuals, of a great people. The classical author of Anacharsis, when in Italy, would often stop as if overcome by his recollections. Amid camps, temples, circuses, hippodromes, and public and private edifices, he, as it were, held an interior converse with the manes of those who seemed hovering about the capital of the old world: as if he had been a citizen of ancient Rome, travelling in the modern. So men of genius have roved amid the awful ruins till the ideal presence has fondly built up the city anew, and have become Romans in the Rome of two thousand years past. POMPONIUS LÆTUS, who devoted his life to this study, was constantly seen wandering amidst the vestiges of this "throne of the world." There, in many a reverie, as his eye rested on the mutilated arch and the broken column, abstracted and immovable, he dropped tears in the ideal presence of Rome and of the Romans. Another enthusiast of this class was BOSIUS, who sought beneath Rome for another Rome, in those catacombs built by the early Christians, for their asylum and their sepulchre. His work of "Roma Sotteranea" is the production of a subterraneous life, passed in fervent and perilous labours. Taking with him a hermit's meal for the week, this new Pliny often descended into the bowels of the earth, by lamp-light, clearing away the sand and ruins till a tomb broke forth, or an inscription became legible. Accompanied by some friend whom his enthusiasm had inspired with his own sympathy, here he dictated his notes, tracing the mouldering sculpture, and catching the fading picture. Thrown

back into the primitive ages of Christianity, amid the local impressions, the historian of the Christian catacombs collected the memorials of an age and of a race, which were hidden beneath the earth.

The same enthusiasm surrounds the world of science with that creating imagination which has startled even men of science by its peculiar discoveries. WERNER, the mineralogist, celebrated for his lectures, appears, by some accounts transmitted by his auditors, to have exercised this faculty. Werner often said that "he always depended on the muse for inspiration." His unwritten lecture was a reverie—till kindling in his progress, blending science and imagination in the grandeur of his conceptions, at times, as if he had gathered about him the very elements of nature, his spirit seemed to be hovering over the waters and the strata. With the same enthusiasm of science, CUVIER meditated on some bones, and some fragments of bones, which could not belong to any known class of the animal kingdom. The philosopher dwelt on these animal ruins till he constructed numerous species which had disappeared from the globe. This sublime naturalist has ascertained and classified the fossil remains of animals whose existence can no longer be traced in the records of mankind. His own language bears testimony to the imagination which carried him on through a career so strange and wonderful. "It is a rational object of ambition in the mind of man, to whom only a short space of time is allotted upon earth, to have the glory of restoring the history of *thousands of ages which preceded the existence of his race, and of thousands of animals that never were contemporaneous with his species.*" Philosophy becomes poetry, and science imagination, in the enthusiasm of genius. Even in the practical part of a science, painful to the operator himself, Mr. Abernethy has declared, and eloquently declared, that this enthusiasm is absolutely requisite. "We have need of enthusiasm, or some strong incentive, to induce us to spend our nights in study, and our days in the disgusting and health-destroying observation of human diseases, which alone can enable us to understand, alleviate, or remove them. On no other terms can we be considered as real students of our profession—to confer that which sick kings would fondly purchase with their diadem—that which wealth cannot purchase, nor state nor rank bestow —to alleviate the most insupportable of human afflictions." Such is the enthusiasm of the physiologist of genius, who elevates the demonstrations of anatomical inquiries by the cultivation of the intellectual faculties, connecting "man with the common Master of the universe."

This enthusiasm inconceivably fills the mind of genius in all

great and solemn operations. It is an agitation amidst calmness, and is required not only in the fine arts, but wherever a great and continued exertion of the soul must be employed. The great ancients, who, if they were not always philosophers, were always men of genius, saw, or imagined they saw, a divinity within the man. This enthusiasm is alike experienced in the silence of study and amidst the roar of cannon, in painting a picture, or in scaling a rampart. View DE THOU, the historian, after his morning prayers, imploring the Divinity to purify his heart from partiality and hatred, and to open his spirit in developing the truth, amidst the contending factions of his times; and HAYDN, employed in his "Creation," earnestly addressing the Creator ere he struck his instrument. In moments like these, man becomes a perfect unity—one thought and one act, abstracted from all other thoughts and all other acts. This intensity of the mind was felt by GRAY in his loftiest excursions, and is perhaps the same power which impels the villager, when, to overcome his rivals in a contest for leaping, he retires back some steps, collects all exertion into his mind, and clears the eventful bound. One of our admirals in the reign of Elizabeth held as a maxim, that a height of passion, amounting to frenzy, was necessary to qualify a man for the command of a fleet; and NELSON, decorated by all his honours about him, on the day of battle, at the sight of those emblems of glory emulated himself. This enthusiasm was necessary for his genius, and made it effective.

But this enthusiasm, prolonged as it often has been by the operation of the imaginative existence, becomes a state of perturbed feeling, and can only be distinguished from a disordered intellect by the power of volition possessed by a sound mind of withdrawing from the ideal world into the world of sense. It is but a step which may carry us from the wanderings of fancy into the aberrations of delirium. The endurance of attention, even in minds of the highest order, is limited by a law of nature; and when thinking is goaded on to exhaustion, confusion of ideas ensues, as straining any one of our limbs by excessive exertion produces tremor and torpor.

> "With curious art the brain too finely wrought
> Preys on herself and is destroyed by Thought;
> Constant attention wears the active mind,
> Blots out her powers, and leaves a blank behind—
> The greatest genius to this fate may bow."

Even minds less susceptible than high genius may become overpowered by their imagination. Often, in the deep silence around us, we seek to relieve ourselves by some voluntary noise or action which may direct our attention to an exterior object, and bring us back to the world, which we had, as it were, left

behind us. The circumstance is sufficiently familiar; as well as another; that whenever we are absorbed in profound contemplation, a startling noise scatters the spirits, and painfully agitates the whole frame. The nerves are then in a state of the utmost relaxation. There may be an agony in thought which only deep thinkers experience. The terrible effect of metaphysical studies on BEATTIE has been told by himself. "Since the Essay on Truth was printed in quarto, I have never *dared* to read it over. I durst not even read the sheets to see whether there were any errors in the print, and was obliged to get a friend to do that office for me. These studies came in time to have dreadful effects upon my nervous system; and I cannot read what I then wrote without some degree of horror, because it recalls to my mind the horrors that I have sometimes felt after passing a long evening in those severe studies."

GOLDONI, after a rash exertion of writing sixteen plays in a year, confesses he paid the penalty of the folly. He flew to Genoa, leading a life of delicious vacuity. To pass the day without doing anything, was all the enjoyment he was now capable of feeling. But long after he said, "I felt at that time, and have ever since continued to feel, the consequence of that exhaustion of spirits I sustained in composing my sixteen comedies."

The enthusiasm of study was experienced by POPE in his self-education, and once it clouded over his fine intellect. It was the severity of his application which distorted his body; and he then partook of a calamity incidental to the family of genius, for he sunk into that state of exhaustion which SMOLLETT experienced during half a year, called a *coma vigil*, an affection of the brain, where the principle of life is so reduced, that all external objects appear to be passing in a dream. BOERHAAVE has related of himself, that having imprudently indulged in intense thought on a particular subject, he did not close his eyes for six weeks after; and TISSOT, in his work on the health of men of letters, abounds in similar cases, where a complete stupor has affected the unhappy student for a period of six months.

Assuredly the finest geniuses have not always the power to withdraw themselves from that intensely interesting train of ideas, which we have shown has not been removed from about them by even the violent stimuli of exterior objects; and the scenical illusion which then occurs, has been called the *hallucinatio studiosa*, or false ideas in reverie. Such was the state in which PETRARCH found himself, in that minute narrative of a vision in which Laura appeared to him; and TASSO, in the lofty conversations he held with a spirit that glided towards him on the beams of the sun. In this state was MALEBRANCHE listening to the voice of God within him; and Lord HERBERT, when,

to know whether he should publish his book, he threw himself on his knees, and interrogated the Deity in the stillness of the sky. And thus PASCAL started at times at a fiery gulf opening by his side. SPINELLO having painted the fall of the rebellious angels, had so strongly imagined the illusion, and more particularly the terrible features of Lucifer, that he was himself struck with such horror as to have been long afflicted with the presence of the demon to which his genius had given birth. The influence of the same ideal presence operated on the religious painter ANGELONI, who could never represent the sufferings of Jesus without his eyes overflowing with tears. DESCARTES, when young, and in a country seclusion, his brain exhausted with meditation, and his imagination heated to excess, heard a voice in the air which called him to pursue the search of truth; nor did he doubt the vision, and this delirious dreaming of genius charmed him even in his after-studies. Our COLLINS and COWPER were often thrown into that extraordinary state of mind, when the ideal presence converts us into visionaries; and their illusions were as strong as SWEDENBORG'S, who saw a terrestrial heaven in the glittering streets of his New Jerusalem; or JACOB BEHMEN'S, who listened to a celestial voice till he beheld the apparition of an angel; or CARDAN'S when he so carefully observed a number of little armed men at his feet; or BENVENUTO CELLINI'S, whose vivid imagination and glorious egotism so frequently contemplated "a resplendent light hovering over his shadow."

Such minds identified themselves with their visions! If we pass them over by asserting that they were insane, we are only cutting the knot which we cannot untie. We have no right to deny what some maintain, that a sympathy of the corporeal with the incorporeal nature of man, his imaginative with his physical existence, is an excitement which appears to have been experienced by persons of a peculiar organisation, and which metaphysicians in despair must resign to the speculations of enthusiasts themselves, though metaphysicians reason about phenomena far removed from the perceptions of the eye. The historian of the mind cannot omit this fact, unquestionable, however incomprehensible. According to our own conceptions, this state must produce a strange mysterious personage: a concentration of a human being within himself, endowed with inward eyes, ears which listen to interior sounds, and invisible hands touching impalpable objects, for whatever they act or however they are acted on, as far as respects themselves all must have passed within their own minds. The Platonic Dr. MORE flattered himself, that he was an enthusiast without enthusiasm, which seems but a suspicious state of convalescence. "I must

ingenuously confess," he says, "that I have a natural touch of enthusiasm in my complexion, but such as I thank God was ever governable enough, and have found at length perfectly subduable. In virtue of which victory I know better what is in enthusiasts than they themselves; and therefore, was able to write with life and judgment, and shall, I hope, contribute not a little to the peace and quiet of this kingdom thereby." Thus far one of its votaries; and all that he vaunts to have acquired by this mysterious faculty of enthusiasm is the having rendered it "at length perfectly subduable." Yet those who have written on "Mystical devotion," have declared, that "It is a sublime state of mind to which whole sects have aspired, and some individuals appear to have attained [1]." The histories of great visionaries, were they correctly detailed, would probably prove how their delusions consisted of the ocular *spectra* of their brain and the accelerated sensations of their nerves. BAYLE has conjured up an amusing theory of apparitions, to show that HOBBES, who was subject to occasional terrors, might fear that a certain combination of atoms agitating his brain might so disorder his mind as to expose him to spectral visions; and so being very timid, and distrusting his own imagination, he was averse at times to be left alone. Apparitions often happen in dreams, but they may happen to a man when awake, for reading and hearing of them would revive their images, and these images might play even an incredulous philosopher some unlucky trick.

But men of genius whose enthusiasm has not been past recovery, have experienced this extraordinary state of the mind, in those exhaustions of study to which they unquestionably are subject. Tissot, on "The Health of Men of Letters," has produced a terrifying number of cases. They see and hear what none but themselves do. Genius thrown into this peculiar state has produced some noble effusions. KOTZEBUE was once absorbed in hypochondriacal melancholy, and appears to have meditated on self-destruction; but it happened, that he preserved his habit of dramatic composition, and produced one of his most energetic dramas—that of "Misanthropy and Repentance." He tells us, that he had never experienced such a rapid flow of thoughts and images, and he believed, what a physiological history would perhaps show, that there are some maladies, those of the brain and the nerves, which actually stretch the powers of the mind beyond their usual reach. It is the more vivid world of ideal existence!

But what is more evident, men of the finest genius have expe-

[1] CHARLES BUTLER has drawn up a sensible essay on "Mystical Devotion." He was a Roman Catholic. NORRIS, and Dr. HENRY MORE, and Bishop BERKLEY, may be consulted by the curious.

rienced these hallucinations in society acting on their moral habits. They have insulated the mind. With them ideas have become realities, and suspicions certainties; while events have been noted down as seen and heard, which in truth had never occurred. ROUSSEAU's phantoms scarcely ever quitted him for a day. BARRY imagined that he was invisibly persecuted by the Royal Academy, who had even spirited up a gang of housebreakers. The vivid memoirs of ALFIERI will authenticate what DONNE, who himself had suffered from them, calls, "these eclipses, sudden offuscations and darkening of the senses." Too often the man of genius, with a vast and solitary power, darkens the scene of life; he builds a pyramid between himself and the sun. Mocking at the expedients by which society has contrived to protect its feebleness, he would break down the institutions from which he has shrunk away in the loneliness of his feelings. Such is the insulating intellect to which some of the most elevated spirits have been reduced. To imbue ourselves with the genius of their works, even to think of them, is an awful thing! In nature their existence is a solecism, as their genius is a paradox; for their crimes seem to be without guilt, their curses have kindness in them, and if they afflict mankind it is in sorrow.

Yet what less than enthusiasm is the purchase-price of high passion and invention? Perhaps never has there been a man of genius of this rare cast, who has not betrayed the ebullitions of imagination in some outward action, at that period when the illusions of life are more real to genius than its realities. There is a *fata morgana*, that throws into the air a pictured land, and the deceived eye trusts till the visionary shadows glide away. "I have dreamt of a golden land," exclaimed FUSELI, "and solicit in vain for the barge which is to carry me to its shore." A slight derangement of our accustomed habits, a little perturbation of the faculties, and a romantic tinge on the feelings, give no indifferent promise of genius; of that generous temper which knowing nothing of the baseness of mankind, with indefinite views carries on some glorious design to charm the world or to make it happier. Often we hear, from the confessions of men of genius, of their having in youth indulged the most elevating and the most chimerical projects; and if age ridicule thy imaginative existence, be assured that it is the decline of its genius. That virtuous and tender enthusiast, FENELON, in his early youth, troubled his friends with a classical and religious reverie. He was on the point of quitting them to restore the independence of Greece, with the piety of a missionary, and with the taste of a classical antiquary. The Peloponnesus opened to him the church of Corinth where St. Paul preached; the Piræus where Socrates conversed; while the

latent poet was to pluck laurels from Delphi, and rove amidst the amenities of Tempe. Such was the influence of the ideal presence; and barren will be his imagination, and luckless his fortune, who, claiming the honours of genius, has never been touched by such a temporary delirium.

To this enthusiasm, and to this alone, can we attribute the self-immolation of men of genius. Mighty and laborious works have been pursued, as a forlorn hope, at the certain destruction of the fortune of the individual. Vast labours attest the enthusiasm which accompanied their progress. Such men have sealed their works with their blood: they have silently borne the pangs of disease; they have barred themselves from the pursuits of fortune; they have torn themselves away from all they loved in life; patiently suffering these self-denials, to escape from interruptions and impediments to their studies. Martyrs of literature and art, they behold in their solitude the halo of immortality over their studious heads—that fame which is "a life beyond life." VAN HELMONT, in his library and his laboratory, preferred their busy solitude to the honours and the invitations of Rodolphus II., there writing down what he daily experienced during thirty years; nor would the enthusiast yield up to the emperor one of those golden and visionary days! MILTON would not desist from proceeding with one of his works, although warned by the physician of the certain loss of his sight. He declared he preferred his duty to his eyes, and doubtless his fame to his comfort. ANTHONY WOOD, to preserve the lives of others, voluntarily resigned his own to cloistered studies; nor did the literary passion desert him in his last moments, when with his dying hands the hermit of literature still grasped his beloved papers, and his last mortal thoughts dwelt on his Athenæ Oxonienses. MORERI, the founder of our great biographical collections, conceived the design with such enthusiasm, and found such seduction in the labour, that he willingly withdrew from the popular celebrity he had acquired as a preacher, and the preferment which a minister of state, in whose house he resided, would have opened to his views. After the first edition of his Historical Dictionary, he had nothing so much at heart as its improvement. His unyielding application was converting labour into death; but collecting his last renovated vigour, with his dying hands he gave the volume to the world, though he did not live to witness even its publication. All objects in life appeared mean to him, compared with that exalted delight of addressing, to the literary men of his age, the history of their brothers. Such are the men, as BACON says of himself, who are "the servants of posterity,"

> "Who scorn delights, and live laborious days!"

The same enthusiasm inspires the pupils of art consumed by their own ardour. The young and classical sculptor who raised the statue of Charles II., placed in the centre of the Royal Exchange, was, in the midst of his work, advised by his medical friends to desist; for the energy of his labour, with the strong excitement of his feelings, already had made fatal inroads in his constitution: but he was willing, he said, to die at the foot of his statue. The statue was raised, and the young sculptor, with the shining eye and hectic flush of consumption, beheld it there —returned home—and died. DROUAIS, a pupil of David, the French painter, was a youth of fortune, but the solitary pleasure of his youth was his devotion to Raphael; he was at his studies from four in the morning till night. "Painting or nothing!" was the cry of this enthusiast of elegance; "First fame, then amusement," was another. His sensibility was great as his enthusiasm; and he cut in pieces the picture for which David declared he would inevitably obtain the prize. "I have had my reward in your approbation; but next year I shall feel more certain of deserving it," was the reply of this young enthusiast. Afterwards he astonished Paris with his Marius; but while engaged on a subject which he could never quit, the principle of life itself was drying up in his veins. HENRY HEADLEY and KIRKE WHITE were the early victims of the enthusiasm of study, and are mourned by the few who are organised like themselves.

"'Twas thine own genius gave the final blow,
And help'd to plant the wound that laid thee low;
So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
And wing'd the shaft that quiver'd in his heart;
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impell'd the steel,
While the same plumage that had warm'd his nest,
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast."

One of our former great students, when reduced in health by excessive study, was entreated to abandon it, and in the scholastic language of the day, not to *perdere substantiam propter accidentia.* With a smile the martyr of study repeated a verse from Juvenal:

Nec propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.
No! not for life lose that for which I live!

Thus the shadow of death falls among those who are existing with more than life about them. "Yet there is no celebrity for the artist," said GESNER, "if the love of his own art do not become a vehement passion; if the hours he employs to cultivate it be not for him the most delicious ones of his life; if study be-

come not his true existence and his first happiness; if the society of his brothers in art be not that which most pleases him; if even in the night-time the ideas of his art do not occupy his vigils or his dreams; if in the morning he fly not to his work, impatient to recommence what he left unfinished. These are the marks of him who labours for true glory and posterity; but if he seek only to please the taste of his age, his works will not kindle the desires nor touch the hearts of those who love the arts and the artists."

Unaccompanied by enthusiasm, genius will produce nothing but uninteresting works of art; not a work of art resembling the dove of Archytas, which beautiful piece of mechanism, while other artists beheld flying, no one could frame such another dove to meet it in the air. Enthusiasm is that secret and harmonious spirit which hovers over the production of genius, throwing the reader of a book, or the spectator of a statue, into the very ideal presence whence these works have really originated. A great work always leaves us in a state of musing.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Jealousy of Genius.—Jealousy often proportioned to the degree of genius.—A perpetual fever among Authors and Artists.—Instances of its incredible excess among brothers and benefactors.—Of a peculiar species, where the fever consumes the sufferer, without its malignancy.

JEALOUSY, long supposed to be the offspring of little minds, is not, however, confined to them. In the literary republic, the passion fiercely rages among the senators, as well as among the people. In that curious self-description which LINNÆUS comprised in a single page, written with the precision of a naturalist, that great man discovered that his constitution was liable to be afflicted with jealousy. Literary jealousy seems often proportioned to the degree of genius, and the shadowy and equivocal claims of literary honour is the real cause of this terrible fear; for in cases where the object is more palpable and definite than intellectual excellence, jealousy does not appear so strongly to affect the claimant for admiration. The most beautiful woman, in the season of beauty, is more haughty than jealous: she rarely encounters a rival; and while her claims exist, who can contend with a fine feature or a dissolving glance? But a man of genius has no other existence than in the opinion of the world; a divided empire would obscure him, and a contested one might prove his annihilation.

The lives of authors and artists exhibit a most painful disease

in that jealousy which is the perpetual fever of their existence. Why does PLATO never mention XENOPHON, and why does XENOPHON inveigh against PLATO, studiously collecting every little rumour which may detract from his fame. They wrote on the same subject! The studied affectation of ARISTOTLE, to differ from the doctrines of his master PLATO while he was following them, led him into ambiguities and contradictions which have been remarked. The two fathers of our poetry, CHAUCER and GOWER, suffered their friendship to be interrupted towards the close of their lives. Chaucer bitterly reflects on his friend for the indelicacy of some of his tales: "Of all such *cursed stories* I say fy!" and GOWER, evidently in return, erased those verses in praise of his friend which he had inserted in the first copy of his "Confessio Amantis." Why did CORNEILLE, tottering to the grave, when RACINE consulted him on his first tragedy, advise the author never to write another? Why does VOLTAIRE continually detract from the sublimity of Corneille, the sweetness of Racine, and the fire of Crebillon? Why did DRYDEN never speak of OTWAY with kindness but when in his grave, then acknowledging that Otway excelled him in the pathetic? Why did LEIBNITZ speak slightingly of LOCKE's Essay, and meditate on nothing less than the complete overthrow of NEWTON's system? Why, when Boccaccio sent to PETRARCH a copy of DANTE, declaring that the work was like a first light which had illuminated his mind, did Petrarch coldly observe that he had not been anxious to inquire after it, for intending himself to compose in the vernacular idiom, he had no wish to be considered as a plagiary? and he only allows Dante's superiority from having written in the vulgar idiom, which he did not consider an enviable merit. Thus frigidly Petrarch could behold the solitary Ætna before him, in the "Inferno," while he shrunk into himself with the painful consciousness of the existence of another poet, obscuring his own majesty. It is curious to observe Lord SHAFTESBURY treating with the most acrimonious contempt the great writers of his own times, Cowley, Dryden, Addison, and Prior. We cannot imagine that his lordship was so entirely destitute of every feeling of wit and genius as would appear by this damnatory criticism on all the wit and genius of his age. It is not, indeed, difficult to comprehend a different motive for this extravagant censure in the jealousy, which even a great writer often experiences when he comes in contact with his living rivals, and hardily, if not impudently, practises those arts of critical detraction to raise a moment's delusion, which can gratify no one but himself.

The moral sense has often been found too weak to temper the malignancy of literary jealousy, and has impelled some men of

genius to an incredible excess. A memorable example offers in the history of the two brothers, Dr. WILLIAM and JOHN HUNTER, both great characters fitted to rivals: but Nature, it was imagined, in the tenderness of blood, had placed a bar to rivalry. John, without any determined pursuit in his youth, was received by his brother at the height of his celebrity; the doctor initiated him into his school; they performed their experiments together; and William Hunter was the first to announce to the world the great genius of his brother. After this close connexion in all their studies and discoveries, Dr. William Hunter published his magnificent work—the proud favourite of his heart, the assertor of his fame. Was it credible that the genius of the celebrated anatomist, which had been nursed under the wing of his brother, should turn on that wing to clip it? John Hunter put in his claim to the chief discovery; it was answered by his brother. The Royal Society, to whom they appealed, concealed the documents of this unnatural feud. The blow was felt, and the jealousy of literary honour for ever separated the brothers—the brothers of genius.

Such, too, was the jealousy which separated Agostino and Annibal CARRACCI, whom their cousin Ludovico for so many years had attempted to unite, and who, during the time their academy existed, worked together, combining their separate powers. The learning and the philosophy of Agostino assisted the invention of the master genius Annibal; but Annibal was jealous of the more literary and poetical character of Agostino, and, by his sarcastic humour, frequently mortified his learned brother. Alike great artists, when once employed on the same work, Agostino was thought to have excelled his brother: Annibal, sullen and scornful, immediately broke with him; and their patron, Cardinal Farnese, was compelled to separate the brothers. Their fate is striking; Agostino, divided from his brother Annibal, sunk into dejection and melancholy, and perished by a premature death, while Annibal closed his days not long after in a state of distraction. The brothers of Nature and Art could not live together, and could not live separate.

The history of artists abounds with instances of jealousy, perhaps more than that of any other class of men of genius. HUDSON, the master of REYNOLDS, could not endure the sight of his rising pupil, and would not suffer him to conclude the term of his apprenticeship; while even the mild and elegant Reynolds himself became so jealous of WILSON, that he took every opportunity of depreciating his singular excellence. Stung by the madness of jealousy, BARRY one day addressing Sir Joshua on his lectures, burst out, "Such poor flimsy stuff as your Discourses!" clenching his fist in the agony of the con-

vulsion. After the death of the great artist, BARRY bestowed on him the most ardent eulogium, and deeply grieved over the past. But the race of genius born too "near the sun," have found their increased sensibility flame into crimes of a deeper dye – crimes attesting the treachery and the violence of the professors of an art, which, it appears, in softening the souls of others, does not necessarily mollify those of the artists themselves. The dreadful story of ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO seems not doubtful. Having been taught the discovery of painting in oil by Domenico Venetiano, yet, still envious of the merit of the generous friend who had confided that great secret to him, Andrea with his own hand secretly assassinated him, that he might remain without a rival. The horror of his crime only appeared in his confession on his death-bed. DOMENICHINO seems to have been poisoned for the preference he obtained over the Neapolitan artists, which raised them to a man against him, and reduced him to the necessity of preparing his food with his own hand. On his last return to Naples, Passeri says, "*Non fu mai più veduto da buon occhio da quelli Napoletani: e li Pittori lo detestavano perchè egli era ritornato — mori con quache sospetto di veleno, e questo non è inverisimile perchè l'interesso è un perfido tiranno.*" So that the Neapolitans honoured Genius at Naples by poison, which they might have forgotten had it flourished at Rome. The famous cartoon of the battle of Pisa, a work of Michael Angelo, which he produced in a glorious competition with the Homer of painting, Leonardo da Vinci, and in which he had struck out the idea of a new style, is only known by a print which has preserved the wonderful composition; for the original, it is said, was cut into pieces by the mad jealousy of BACCIO BANDINELLI, whose whole life was made miserable by his consciousness of a superior rival.

In the jealousy of genius, however, there is a peculiar case where the fever silently consumes the sufferer, without possessing the malignant character of the disease. Even the gentlest temper declines under its slow wastings, and this infection may happen among dear friends, whenever a man of genius loses that self-opinion which animates his solitary labours and constitutes his happiness. Perhaps when at the height of his class, he suddenly views himself eclipsed by another genius—and that genius his friend! This is the jealousy not of hatred, but of despair. Churchill observed the feeling, but probably included in it a greater degree of malignancy than I would now describe.

"Envy which turns pale,
And sickens even if a friend prevail."

SWIFT, in that curious poem on his own death, said of POPE, that

> "—He can in one couplet fix
> More sense than I can do in six."

The Dean, perhaps, is not quite serious, but probably is in the next lines:

> "It gives me such a jealous fit,
> I cry 'Pox take him and his wit.'"

If the reader pursue this hint throughout the poem, these compliments to his friends, always at his own expense, exhibit a singular mixture of the sensibility and the frankness of true genius, which Swift himself has honestly confessed.

> "What poet would not grieve to see
> His brother write as well as he?"

ADDISON experienced this painful and mixed emotion in his intercourse with POPE, to whose rising celebrity he soon became too jealously alive. It was more tenderly, but not less keenly, felt by the Spanish artist CASTILLO, a man distinguished by every amiable disposition. He was the great painter of Seville; but when some of his nephew MURILLO's paintings were shown to him, he stood in meek astonishment before them, and turning away, he exclaimed with a sigh, *Yà murio Castillo!* Castillo is no more! Returning home, the stricken genius relinquished his pencil, and pined away in hopelessness. The same occurrence happened to PIETRO PERUGINO, the master of Raphael, whose general character as a painter was so entirely eclipsed by his far renowned scholar; yet while his real excellences in the ease of his attitudes and the mild grace of his female countenances have been passed over, it is probable that Raphael himself might have caught from them his first feelings of ideal beauty.

CHAPTER XIV.

Want of mutual esteem, among men of genius, often originates in a deficiency of analogous ideas.—It is not always envy or jealousy which induces men of genius to undervalue each other.

AMONG men of genius, that want of mutual esteem, usually attributed to envy or jealousy, often originates in a deficiency of analogous ideas, or of sympathy, in the parties. On this principle several curious phenomena in the history of genius may be explained.

Every man of genius has a manner of his own; a mode of thinking and a habit of style, and usually decides on a work as it approximates or varies from his own. When one great author depreciates another, his depreciation has often no worse source than his own taste. The witty Cowley despised the natural Chaucer; the austere classical Boileau the rough sublimity of Crébillon; the refining Marivaux the familiar Molière. Fielding ridiculed Richardson, whose manner so strongly contrasted with his own; and Richardson contemned Fielding, and declared he would not last. Cumberland escaped a fit of unforgiveness, not living to read his own character by Bishop Watson, whose logical head tried the lighter elegancies of that polished man by his own nervous genius, destitute of the beautiful in taste. There was no envy in the breast of Johnson when he advised Mrs. Thrale not to purchase Gray's Letters, as trifling and dull, no more than there was in Gray himself when he sunk the poetical character of Shenstone, and debased his simplicity and purity of feeling, by an image of ludicrous contempt. I have heard that WILKES, a mere wit and elegant scholar, used to treat GIBBON as a mere bookmaker; and applied to that philosophical historian the verse by which Voltaire described, with so much caustic facetiousness, the genius of the Abbé Trublet:

> "Au peu d'esprit que le bon homme avait
> L'esprit d'autrui par supplément servait,
> Il entassait adage sur adage,
> Il compilait, compilait, compilait."

The deficient sympathy in these men of genius for modes of feeling opposite to their own was the real cause of their opinions; and thus it happens that even superior genius is so often liable to be unjust and false in its decisions.

The same principle operates still more strikingly in the remarkable contempt of men of genius for those pursuits which require talents distinct from their own, and a cast of mind thrown by nature into another mould. Hence we must not be surprised at the poetical antipathies of Selden and Locke, as well as Longuerue and Buffon. Newton called poetry "ingenious nonsense." On the other side, poets undervalue the pursuits of the antiquary, the naturalist, and the metaphysician, forming their estimate by their own favourite scale of imagination. As we can only understand in the degree we comprehend, and feel in the degree in which we sympathise, we may be sure that in both these cases the parties will be found altogether deficient in those qualities of genius which constitute the excellence of the other. To this cause, rather than to the one the friends of MICKLE ascribed to ADAM SMITH, namely, a per-

sonal dislike to the poet, may we place the severe mortification which the unfortunate translators of Camoens suffered from the person to whom he dedicated "The Lusiad." This Duke of Buccleugh was the pupil of the great political economist, and so little valued an epic poem, that his grace had not even the curiosity to open the leaves of the presentation copy.

A professor of polite literature condemned the study of botany, as adapted to mediocrity of talent, and only demanding patience; but LINNÆUS showed how a man of genius becomes a creator even in a science which seems to depend only on order and method. It will not be a question with some whether a man must be endowed with the energy and aptitude of genius, to excel in antiquarianism, in natural history, and similar pursuits. The prejudices raised against the claims of such to the honours of genius have probably arisen from the secluded nature of their pursuits, and the little knowledge which the men of wit and imagination possess of these persons, who live in a society of their own. On this subject a very curious circumstance has been revealed respecting PEIRESC, whose enthusiasm for science was long felt throughout Europe. His name was known in every country, and his death was lamented in forty languages; yet was this great literary character unknown to several men of genius in his own country; Rochefoucauld declared he had never heard of his name, and Malherbe wondered why his death created so universal a sensation.

Madame DE STAEL was an experienced observer of the habits of the literary character, and she has remarked how one student usually revolts from the other when *their occupations are different,* because they are a reciprocal annoyance. The scholar has nothing to say to the poet, the poet to the naturalist; and even among men of science, those who are differently occupied avoid each other, taking little interest in what is out of their own circle. Thus we see the classes of literature, like the planets, revolving as distinct worlds; and it would not be less absurd for the inhabitants of Venus to treat with contempt the powers and faculties of those of Jupiter, than it is for the men of wit and imagination, those of the men of knowledge and curiosity. The wits are incapable of exerting the peculiar qualities which give a real value to these pursuits, and therefore they must remain ignorant of their nature and their result.

It is not then always envy or jealousy which induces men of genius to undervalue each other; the want of sympathy will sufficiently account for the want of judgment. Suppose NEWTON, QUINAULT, and MACHIAVEL accidentally meeting together, and unknown to each other, would they not soon have desisted from the vain attempt of communicating their ideas? The philosopher

would have condemned the poet of the Graces as an intolerable trifler, and the author of "The Prince" as a dark political spy. Machiavel would have conceived Newton to be a dreamer among the stars, and a mere almanack-maker among men; and the other a rhymer, nauseously *doucereux*. Quinault might have imagined that he was seated between two madmen. Having annoyed each other for some time, they would have relieved their ennui by reciprocal contempt, and each have parted with a determination to avoid henceforward two such disagreeable companions.

CHAPTER XV.

Self-praise of genius.—The love of praise instinctive in the nature of genius.—A high opinion of themselves necessary for their great designs.—The Ancients openly claimed their own praise.—And several Moderns.—An author knows more of his merits than his readers—And less of his defects.—Authors versatile in their admiration and their malignity.

VANITY, egotism, a strong sense of their own sufficiency, form another accusation against men of genius; but the complexion of self-praise must alter with the occasion; for the simplicity of truth may appear vanity, and the consciousness of superiority seem envy—to Mediocrity. It is we who do nothing, and cannot even imagine anything to be done, who are so much displeased with self-lauding, self-love, self-independence, self-admiration, which with the man of genius may often be nothing but an ostensible modification of the passion of glory.

He who exults in himself is at least in earnest; but he who refuses to receive that praise in public for which he has devoted so much labour in his privacy, is not: for he is compelled to suppress the very instinct of his nature. We censure no man for loving fame, but only for showing us how much he is possessed by the passion: thus we allow him to create the appetite, but we deny him its aliment. Our effeminate minds are the willing dupes of what is called the modesty of genius, or, as it has been termed, "the polished reserve of modern times;" and this from the selfish principle that it serves at least to keep out of the company its painful pre-eminence. But this "polished reserve," like something as fashionable, the ladies' rouge, at first appearing with rather too much colour, will in the heat of an evening die away till the true complexion come out. What subterfuges are resorted to by these pretended modest men of genius, to extort that praise from their private circle which is thus openly denied them! They have been taken by surprise en-

larging their own panegyric, which might rival Pliny's on Trajan, for care and copiousness; or impudently veiling themselves with the transparency of a third person; or never prefixing their name to the volume, which they would not easily forgive a friend to pass unnoticed.

Self-love is a principle of action; but among no class of human beings has nature so profusely distributed this principle of life and action as through the whole sensitive family of genius. It reaches even to a feminine susceptibility. The love of praise is instinctive in their nature. Praise with them is the evidence of the past and the pledge of the future. The generous qualities and the virtues of a man of genius are really produced by the applause conferred on him. "To him whom the world admires, the happiness of the world must be dear," said Madame De Stael. Romney, the painter, held as a maxim that every diffident artist required "almost a daily portion of cheering applause." How often do such find their powers paralysed by the depression of confidence or the appearance of neglect! When the North American Indians, amid their circle, chant their gods and their heroes, the honest savages laud the living worthies, as well as their departed; and when, as we are told, an auditor hears the shout of his own name, he answers by a cry of pleasure and of pride. The savage and the man of genius are here true to nature, but pleasure and pride in his own name must raise no emotion in the breast of genius amidst a polished circle. To bring himself down to their usual mediocrity, he must start at an expression of regard, and turn away even from one of his own votaries. Madame De Staël, an exquisite judge of the feelings of the literary character, was aware of this change, which has rather occurred in our manners than in men of genius themselves. "Envy," says that eloquent writer, "among the Greeks, existed sometimes between rivals; it has now passed to the spectators; and by a strange singularity the mass of men are jealous of the efforts which are tried to add to their pleasures or to merit their approbation."

But this, it seems, is not always the case with men of genius, since the accusation we are noticing has been so often reiterated. Take from some the supreme confidence in themselves, that pride of exultation, and you crush the germ of their excellence. Many vast designs must have perished in the conception, had not their authors breathed this vital air of self-delight, this creative spirit, so operative in great undertakings. We have recently seen this principle in the literary character unfold itself in the life of the late Bishop of Landaff. Whatever he did, he felt it was done as a master; whatever he wrote, it was, as he once declared, the best work on the subject yet written. With this

feeling he emulated Cicero in retirement or in action. "When I am dead, you will not soon meet with another JOHN HUNTER," said the great anatomist to one of his garrulous friends. An apology is formed by his biographer for relating the fact, but the weakness is only in the apology. When HOGARTH was engaged in his work of the *Mariage à la Mode*, he said to Reynolds, "I shall very soon gratify the world with such a sight as they have never seen equalled."—"One of his foibles," adds Northcote, "it is well known, was the excessive high opinion he had of his own abilities." So pronounced Northcote, who had not an atom of his genius. Was it a *foible* in Hogarth to cast the glove, when he always more than redeemed the pledge? CORNEILLE has given a very noble full-length of the sublime egotism which accompanied him through life [1]; but I doubt, if we had any such author in the present day, whether he would dare to be so just to himself, and so hardy to the public. The self-praise of BUFFON at least equalled his genius; and the inscription beneath his statue in the library of the Jardin des Plantes, which I have been told was raised to him in his lifetime, exceeds all panegyric; it places him alone in nature, as the first and the last interpreter of her works. He said of the great geniuses of modern ages, that "there were not more than five; Newton, Bacon, Leibnitz, Montesquieu, and Myself." With this spirit he conceived and terminated his great works, and sat in patient meditation at his desk for half a century, till all Europe, even in a state of war, bowed to the modern Pliny.

Nor is the vanity of Buffon, and Voltaire, and Rousseau purely national; for men of genius in all ages have expressed a consciousness of the internal force of genius. No one felt this self-exultation more potent than our HOBBES; who has indeed, in his controversy with Wallis, asserted that there may be nothing more just than self-commendation [2]. There is a curious passage in the Purgatorio of DANTE, where, describing the transitory nature of literary fame, and the variableness of human opinion, the poet alludes with confidence to his own future greatness. Of two authors of the name of Guido the one having eclipsed the other, the poet writes:—

> Così ha tolto l'uno all'altro Guido
> La gloria della lingua: e *forse è nato*
> *Chi l'uno e l'altro caccerà di nido.*
>
> Thus has one Guido from the other snatch'd
> The letter'd pride; *and he perhaps is born*
> *Who shall drive either from their nest* [3].

[1] See it versified in Curiosities of Literature.
[2] See Quarrels of Authors.
[3] Cary.

De Thou, one of the most noble-minded of historians, in the Memoirs of his own life, composed in the third person, has surprised and somewhat puzzled the critics, by that frequent distribution of self-commendation which they knew not how to reconcile with the modesty and gravity with which the President was so amply endowed. After his great and solemn labour, amidst the injustice of his persecutors, this eminent man had sufficient experience of his real worth to assert it. Kepler, amidst his sublime discoveries, looks down like a superior being on other men. He breaks forth in glory and daring egotism: "I dare insult mankind by confessing that I am he who has turned science to advantage. If I am pardoned, I shall rejoice; if blamed, I shall endure it. The die is cast; I have written this book, and whether it be read by posterity or by my contemporaries is of no consequence; it may well wait for a reader during one century, when God himself during six thousand years has not sent an observer like myself." He truly predicts that "his discoveries would be verified in succeeding ages;" and prefers his own glory to the possession of the electorate of Saxony. It was this solitary majesty, this futurity of their genius, which hovered over the sleepless pillow of Bacon, of Newton, and of Montesquieu; of Ben Jonson, of Milton, and Corneille; and of Michael Angelo. Such men anticipate their contemporaries; they know they are creators, long before they are hailed as such by the tardy consent of the public. These men stand on Pisgah heights, and for them the sun shines on a land which none yet view but themselves.

There is an admirable essay in Plutarch, "On the manner by which we may praise ourselves without exciting envy in others." The sage seems to consider self-praise as a kind of illustrious impudence, and has one very striking image: he compares these eulogists to famished persons, who finding no other food, in their rage have eaten their own flesh, and thus shockingly nourished themselves by their own substance. He allows persons in high office to praise themselves, if by this they can repel calumny and accusation, as did Pericles before the Athenians: but the Romans found fault with Cicero, who so frequently reminded them of his exertions in the conspiracy of Catiline; while, when Scipio told them that "they should not presume to judge of a citizen to whom they owed the power of judging all men," the people covered themselves with flowers, and followed him to the capitol to join in a thanksgiving to Jove. "Cicero," adds Plutarch, "praised himself without necessity. Scipio was in personal danger, and this took away what is odious in self-praise." An author seems sometimes to occupy the situation of a person in high office; and there may be occasions when with

a noble simplicity, if he appeal to his works, of which all men may judge, he may be permitted to assert or to maintain his claims. It has at least been the practice of men of genius, for in this very essay we find Timotheus, Euripides, and Pindar censured, though they deserved all the praise they gave themselves.

EPICURUS, writing to a minister of state, declares, "If you desire glory, nothing can bestow it more than the letters I write to you;" and SENECA, in quoting these words, adds, "What Epicurus promised to his friend, that, my Lucilius, I promise you." *Orna me!* was the constant cry of CICERO; and he desires the historian Lucceius to write separately the conspiracy of Catiline, and to publish quickly, that while he yet lived he might taste the sweetness of his glory. HORACE and OVID were equally sensible to their immortality; but what modern poet would be tolerated with such an avowal? Yet DRYDEN honestly declares that it was better for him to own this failing of vanity, than the world to do it for him; and adds, "For what other reason have I spent my life in so unprofitable a study? Why am I grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame? The same parts and application which have made me a poet, might have raised me to any honours of the gown." Was not CERVANTES very sensible to his own merits when a rival started up? and did he not assert them too, and distinguish his own work by a handsome compliment? LOPE DE VEGA celebrated his own poetic powers under the pseudonyme of a pretended editor, Thomas Barguillos. I regret that his noble biographer, than whom no one can more truly sympathise with the emotions of genius, had censured the bard for his querulous or his intrepid tone, and for the quaint conceit of his title-page, where his detractor is introduced as a beetle in a *vega* or garden, attacking its flowers, but expiring in the very sweetness he would injure. The inscription under BOILEAU'S portrait, which gives a preference to the French satirist over Juvenal and Horace, is known to have been written by himself. Nor was BUTLER less proud of his own merits; for he has done ample justice to his Hudibras, and traced out, with great self-delight, its variety of excellences. RICHARDSON, the novelist, exhibits one of the most striking instances of what is called literary vanity, the delight of an author in his works; he has pointed out all the beauties of his three great works, in various manners[1]. He always taxed a visitor by one of his long letters. It was this intense self-delight which produced his voluminous labours.

There are certain authors whose very existence seems to

[1] I have observed them in Curiosities of Literature.

require a high conception of their own talents; and who must, as some animals appear to do, furnish the means of life out of their own substance. These men of genius open their career with peculiar tastes, or with a predilection for some great work of no immediate interest; in a word, with many unpopular dispositions. Yet we see them magnanimous, though defeated, proceeding with the public feeling against them. At length we view them ranking with their rivals. Without having yielded up their peculiar tastes or their incorrigible viciousness, they have, however, heightened their individual excellences. No human opinion can change their self-opinion. Alive to the consciousness of their powers, their pursuits are placed above impediment, and their great views can suffer no contraction; *possunt quia posse videntur*. Such was the language Lord BACON once applied to himself when addressing a king. "I know," said the great philosopher, "that I am censured of some conceit of my ability or worth; but I pray your majesty impute it to desire—*possunt quia posse videntur*." These men of genius bear a charmed mail on their breast; "hopeless, not heartless," may be often the motto of their ensign; and if they do not always possess reputation, they still look onwards for fame; for these do not necessarily accompany each other.

An author is more sensible of his own merits, as he also is of his labour, which is invisible to all others, while he is unquestionably much less sensible to his defects than most of his readers. The author not only comprehends his merits better, because they have passed through a long process in his mind, but he is familiar with every part, while the reader has but a vague notion of the whole. Why does an excellent work, by repetition, rise in interest? Because in obtaining this gradual intimacy with an author, we appear to recover half the genius which we had lost on a first perusal. The work of genius too is associated, in the mind of the author, with much more than it contains; and the true supplement, which he only can give, has not always accompanied the work itself. We find great men often greater than the books they write. Ask the man of genius if he have written all that he wished to have written? Has he satisfied himself in this work, for which you accuse his pride? Has he dared what required intrepidity to achieve? Has he evaded difficulties which he should have overcome? The mind of the reader has the limits of a mere recipient while that of the author, even after his work, is teeming with creation. "On many occasions, my soul seems to know more than it can say, and to be endowed with a mind by itself, far superior to the mind I really have," said MARIVAUX, with equal truth and happiness.

With these explanations of what are called the vanity and egotism of Genius, be it remembered, that the sense of their own sufficiency is assumed by men at their own risk. The great man who thinks greatly of himself, is not diminishing that greatness in heaping fuel on his fire. It is indeed otherwise with his unlucky brethren, with whom an illusion of literary vanity may end in the aberrations of harmless madness; as it happened to PERCIVAL STOCKDALE. After a parallel between himself and Charles XII. of Sweden, he concludes that "some parts will be to *his* advantage, and some to *mine*;" but in regard to fame, the main object between himself and Charles XII., Percival imagined that "his own will not probably take its fixed and immovable station, and shine with its expanded and permanent splendour, till it consecrates his ashes, till it illumines his tomb." After this, the reader, who may never have heard of the name of Percival Stockdale, must be told that there exist his own "Memoirs of his Life and Writings[1]." The memoirs of a scribbler who saw the prospects of life close on him while he imagined that his contemporaries were unjust, are instructive to literary men. To correct, and to be corrected, should be their daily practice, that they may be taught not only to exult in themselves, but to fear themselves.

It is hard to refuse these men of genius that *aura vitalis*, of which they are so apt to be liberal to others. Are they not accused of the meanest adulations? When a young writer experiences the notice of a person of some eminence, he has expressed himself in language which transcends that of mortality. A finer reason than reason itself inspires it. The sensation has been expressed with all its fulness by Milton:

> "The debt immense of endless gratitude."

Who ever pays an "immense debt" in small sums? Every man of genius has left such honourable traces of his private affections; from LOCKE, whose dedication of his great work is more adulative than could be imagined from a temperate philosopher, to CHURCHILL, whose warm eulogiums on his friends beautifully contrast with his satire. Even in advanced age, the man of genius dwells on the praise he caught in his youth from veteran genius, which, like the aloe, will flower at the end of life. When Virgil was yet a youth, it is said that Cicero heard one of his eclogues, and exclaimed with his accustomed warmth,

> Magna spes altera Romæ!

[1] I have sketched a character of PERCIVAL STOCKDALE, in *Calamities of Authors*, it was taken *ad vivum*.

"The second hope of mighty Rome!" intending by the first either himself or Lucretius. The words of Cicero were the secret honey on which the imagination of Virgil fed for many a year; for in one of his latest productions, the twelfth book of the Æneid, he applies these very words to Ascanius. So long had the accents of Cicero's praise lingered in the poet's ear!

This extreme susceptibility of praise in men of genius is the same exuberant sensibility which is so alive to censure. I have elsewhere fully shown how some have died of criticism [1]. The self-love of genius is perhaps much more delicate than gross.

But this fatal susceptibility is the cause of that strange facility which has often astonished the world, by the sudden transitions of sentiment which literary characters have frequently exhibited. They have eulogised men and events which they had reprobated, and reprobated what they had eulogised. The recent history of political revolutions has furnished some monstrous examples of this subservience to power. Guicciardini records one of his own times, which has been often repeated in ours. JOVIANUS PONTANUS; the secretary of Ferdinand King of Naples, was also selected to be the tutor of the prince, his son. When Charles VIII. of France invaded Naples, Pontanus was deputed to address the French conqueror. To render himself agreeable to the enemies of his country, he did not avoid expatiating on the demerits of his expelled patrons: "So difficult it is," adds the grave and dignified historian, "for ourselves to observe that moderation and those precepts which no man knew better than Pontanus; who was endowed with such copious literature, and composed with such facility in moral philosophy, and possessed such acquirements in universal erudition, that he had made himself a prodigy to the eye of the world [2]." The student, occupied by abstract pursuits, may not indeed always take much interest in the change of dynasties; and perhaps the famous cancelled dedication to Cromwell, by the learned Orientalist DR. CASTELL, who supplied its place by another to Charles II., ought not to be placed to the account of political tergiversation. But the versatile adoration of the continental *savans* of the republic or the monarchy, the consul or the emperor, has inflicted an unhealing wound on the literary character; since, like PONTANUS, to gratify their new master, they had not the greatness of mind to save themselves from ingratitude to their old.

Their vengeance, as quickly kindled, lasts as long. Genius is a dangerous gift of nature. The same effervescent passions from

[1] In Curiosities of Literature.
[2] Guicciardini, Book II.

a Catiline or a Cicero. Plato lays great stress on his man of genius possessing the most vehement passions, but he adds reason to restrain them. It is Imagination which by their side stands as their good or evil spirit. Glory or infamy is but a different direction of the same passion.

How are we to describe symptoms which, flowing from one source, yet show themselves in such opposite forms as those of an intermittent fever, a silent delirium, or a horrid hypochondriasm? Have we no other opiate to still the agony, no other cordial to warm the heart, than the great ingredient in the recipe of Plato's visionary man of genius – calm reason? Must men, who so rarely obtain this tardy panacea, remain with all their tortured and torturing passions about them, often self-disgusted, self-humiliated? The enmities of genius are often connected with their morbid imagination. These originate in casual slights, or in unguarded expressions, or in hasty opinions, or in witty derision, or even in the obtruding goodness of tender admonition. The man of genius broods over the phantom that darkens his feelings: he multiplies a single object; he magnifies the smallest; and suspicions become certainties. It is in this unhappy state that he sharpens his vindictive fangs, in a libel called his "Memoirs," or in another species of public outrage, styled a "Criticism."

We are told, that COMINES the historian, when residing at the court of the Count de Charolois, afterwards Duke of Burgundy, one day returning from hunting, with inconsiderate jocularity sat down before the Count, and ordered the prince to pull off his boots. The Count would not affect greatness, and having executed his commission, in return for the princely amusement, the Count dashed the boot on Comines's nose, which bled; and from that time, he was mortified at the court of Burgundy, by retaining the nickname of *the booted head*. The blow rankled in the heart of the man of genius, and the Duke of Burgundy has come down to us in COMINES' Memoirs, blackened by his vengeance. Many, unknown to their readers, like COMINES, have had a booted head; but the secret poison is distilled on their lasting page, as we have recently witnessed in Lord Waldegrave's Memoirs. Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden originated in that great poet's prediction, that "cousin Swift would never be a poet;" a prediction which the wit never could forget. I have elsewhere fully written a tale of literary hatred, where is seen a man of genius, in the character of GILBERT STEWART, devoting a whole life to harassing the industry or the genius which he himself could not attain [1].

[1] See Calamities of Authors.

A living Italian poet, of great celebrity, when at the court of Rome, presented a magnificent edition of his poetry to Pius VI. The bard, Mr. Hobhouse informs us, lived not in the good graces of his holiness, and although the pontiff accepted the volume, he did not forbear a severity of remark which could not fall unheeded by the modern poet; for on this occasion, repeating some verses of Metastasio, his holiness drily added, "No one now-a-days writes like that great poet." Never was this to be erased from memory: the stifled resentment of MONTI vehemently broke forth at the moment the French carried off Pius VI. from Rome. Then the long indignant secretary poured forth an invective more severe "against the great harlot," than was ever traced by a Protestant pen—MONTI now invoked the rock of Sardinia; the poet bade it fly from its base, that *the last of monsters* might not find even a tomb to shelter him. Such was the curse of a poet on his former patron, now an object of misery—a return for "placing him below Metastasio!"

The French Revolution affords illustrations of the worst human passions. When the wretched COLLOT D'HERBOIS was tossed up in the storm to the summit of power, a monstrous imagination seized him; he projected razing the city of Lyons and massacring its inhabitants. He had even the heart to commence, and to continue his conspiracy against human nature; the ostensible crime was royalism, but the secret motive is said to have been literary vengeance! As wretched a poet and actor as a man, D'Herbois had been hissed off the theatre at Lyons, and to avenge that ignominy, he had meditated over this vast and remorseless crime. Is there but one Collot D'Herbois in the universe?

Long since this was written, a fact has been recorded of CHENIER, the French dramatic poet, which parallels the horrid tale of Collot D'Herbois, which some have been willing to doubt from its enormity. It is said, that this monster, in the revolutionary period, when he had the power to save the life of his brother André, while his father, prostrate before a wretched son, was imploring for the life of an innocent brother, remained silent; it is further said, that he appropriated to himself a tragedy which he found among his brother's manuscripts. "Fratricide from literary jealousy," observes the relator of this anecdote, "was a crime reserved for a modern French revolutionist [1]." There are some pathetic stanzas which André was composing in his last moments, when awaiting his fate; the most pathetic of all stanzas is that one which he left unfinished—

[1] Edinburgh Review, xxxv. 159.

Peut-être, avant que l'heure en cercle promenée
Ait posé, sur l'émail brillant,
Dans les soixante pas où sa route est bornée,
Son pied sonore et vigilant,
Le sommeil du tombeau pressera ma paupière—

At this unfinished stanza, was the pensive poet summoned to the guillotine!

CHAPTER XVI.

The domestic life of genius.—Defects of great compositions attributed to domestic infelicities.—The home of the literary character should be the abode of repose and silence.—Of the Father.—Of the Mother.—Of family genius.—Men of genius not more respected than other men in their domestic circle.—The cultivators of science and art do not meet on equal terms with others, in domestic life.—Their neglect of those around them.—Often accused of imaginary crimes.

WHEN the temper and the leisure of the literary character are alike broken, even his best works, the too faithful mirrors of his state of mind, will participate in its inequalities; and surely the incubations of genius, in its delicate and shadowy combinations, are not less sensible in their operation than the composition of sonorous bodies, where, while the warm metal is settling in the mould, even an unusual vibration of the air during the moment of fusion will injure the tone.

Some of the conspicuous blemishes of several great compositions may be attributed to the domestic infelicities of their authors. The desultory life of CAMOENS is imagined to be perceptible in the deficient connexion of his epic; and MILTON'S blindness and divided family prevented that castigating criticism, which otherwise had erased passages which have escaped from his revising hand. He felt himself in the situation of his Samson Agonistes, whom he so pathetically describes as,

"His foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind."

Even LOCKE complains of his "discontinued way of writing," and "writing by incoherent parcels," from the avocations of a busy and unsettled life, which undoubtedly produced a deficiency of method in the disposition of the materials of his great work. The careless rapid lines of DRYDEN are justly attributed to his distress, and indeed he pleads for his inequalities from his domestic circumstances. JOHNSON often silently, but eagerly, corrected the Ramblers in their successive editions, of which so many had been despatched in haste. The learned GREAVES offered some excuses for his errors in his edition of Abulfeda, from "his being five years encumbered with law-

suits and diverted from his studies." When at length he returned to them, he expresses his surprise "at the pains he had formerly undergone," but of which he now felt himself "unwilling, he knew not how, of again undergoing." GOLDONI, when at the bar, abandoned his comic talent for several years; and having resumed it, his first comedy totally failed: "My head," says he, "was occupied with my professional employment; I was uneasy in mind and in bad humour." A law-suit, a bankruptcy, a domestic feud, or an indulgence in criminal or in foolish pursuits, have chilled the fervour of imagination, scattered into fragments many a noble design, and paralysed the finest genius. The distractions of GUIDO's studies from his passion for gaming, and of PARMEGIANO's for alchemy, have been traced in their works, which are often hurried over and unequal. It is curious to observe, that CUMBERLAND attributes the excellence of his comedy, "The West Indian," to the peculiarly happy situation in which he found himself at the time of its composition, free from the incessant avocations which had crossed him in the writing of "The Brothers." "I was master of my time, my mind was free, and I was happy in the society of the dearest friends I had on earth. The calls of office, the cavillings of angry rivals, and the gibings of newspaper critics, could not reach me on the banks of the Shannon, where all within doors was love and affection. In no other period of my life have the same happy circumstances combined to cheer me in any of my literary labours."

The best years of MENGS' life were embittered by his father, a poor artist, and who, with poorer feelings, converted his home into a prison-house, forced his son into the slavery of stipulated task-work, while bread and water were the only fruits of the fine arts. In this domestic persecution, the son contracted those morose and saturnine habits which in after-life marked the character of the ungenial MENGS. ALONSO CANO, a celebrated Spanish painter, would have carried his art to perfection, had not the unceasing persecution of the inquisitors entirely deprived him of that tranquillity so necessary to the very existence of art. OVID, in exile on the barren shores of Tomos, deserted by his genius, in his copious *Tristia* loses much of the luxuriance of his fancy.

We have a remarkable evidence of domestic unhappiness annihilating the very faculty of genius itself, in the case of Dr. BROOK TAYLOR, the celebrated author of the "Linear Perspective." This great mathematician in early life distinguished himself as an inventor in science, and the most sanguine hopes of his future discoveries were raised both at home and abroad. Two unexpected events in domestic life extinguished his inven-

tive faculties. After the loss of two wives, whom he regarded with no common affection, he became unfitted for profound studies; he carried his own personal despair into his favourite objects of pursuit, and abandoned them. The inventor of the most original work suffered the last fifteen years of his life to drop away, without hope, and without exertion; nor is this a solitary instance, where a man of genius, deprived of the idolised partner of his existence, has no longer been able to find an object in his studies, and where even fame itself has ceased to interest. The reason which ROUSSEAU alleges for the cynical spleen which so frequently breathes forth in his works, shows how the domestic character of the man of genius leaves itself in his productions. After describing the infelicity of his domestic affairs, occasioned by the mother of Theresa, and Theresa herself, both women of the lowest class and the worst dispositions, he adds, on this wretched marriage. "These unexpected disagreeable events, in a state of my own choice, plunged me into literature, to give a new direction and diversion to my mind; and in all my first works, I scattered that bilious humour which had occasioned this very occupation." Our author's character in his works was the very opposite to the one in which he appeared to these low people. Feeling his degradation among them, for they treated his simplicity as utter silliness, his personal timidity assumed a tone of boldness and originality in his writings, while a strong personal sense of shame heightened his causticity, and he delighted to contemn that urbanity in which he had never shared, and which he knew not to practise. His miserable subservience to these people was the real cause of his oppressed spirit calling out for some undefined freedom in society; and thus the real Rousseau, with all his disordered feelings, only appeared in his writings. The secrets of his heart were confined to his pen.

"The painting-room must be like Eden before the fall; no joyless turbulent passions must enter there,"—exclaims the enthusiast RICHARDSON. The home of the literary character should be the abode of repose and of silence. There must he look for the feasts of study, in progressive and alternate labours; a taste "which," says GIBBON, "I would not exchange for the treasures of India." ROUSSEAU had always a work going on, for rainy days and spare hours, such as his dictionary of music: a variety of works never tired; it was the single one which exhausted. METASTASIO looks with delight on his variety, which resembled the fruits in the garden of Armida.

E mentre spunta l'un, l'altro matura.
While one matures, the other buds and blows.

Nor is it always fame, or any lower motive, which may induce the literary character to hold an unwearied pen. Another equally powerful exists, which must remain inexplicable to him who knows not to escape from the listlessness of life—it is the passion for literary occupation. He whose eye can only measure the space occupied by the voluminous labours of the elder Pliny, of a Mazzuchelli, a Muratori, a Montfaucon, and a Gough, all men who laboured from the love of labour, and can see nothing in that space but the industry which filled it, is like him who only views a city at a distance—the streets and the edifices, and all the life and population within, he can never know. These literary characters projected their works as so many schemes to escape from uninteresting pursuits; and, in these folios, how many evils of life did they bury, while their happiness expanded with their volume! Aulus Gellius desired to live no longer than he was able to retain the faculty of writing and observing. The literary character must grow as impassioned with his subject as Ælian with his History of Animals; "wealth and honour I might have obtained at the courts of princes; but I preferred the delight of multiplying my knowledge. I am aware that the avaricious and the ambitious will accuse me of folly, but I have always found most pleasure in observing the nature of animals, studying their character, and writing their history."

Even with those who have acquired their celebrity, the love of literary labour is not diminished; a circumstance recorded by the younger Pliny of Livy. In a preface to one of his lost books, that historian had said that he had obtained sufficient glory by his former writings on the Roman history, and might now repose in silence; but his mind was so restless and so abhorrent of indolence, that it only felt its existence in literary exertion. In a similar situation the feeling was fully experienced by Hume. Our philosopher completed his History neither for money nor for fame, having then more than a sufficiency of both—but chiefly to indulge a habit as a resource against indolence [1]. These are the minds which are without hope, if they are without occupation.

Amidst the repose and silence of study, delightful to the literary character, are the soothing interruptions of the voices of those whom he loves, recalling him from his abstraction into social existence. These re-animate his languor, and moments of inspiration are caught in the emotions of affection, when a father or a friend, a wife, a daughter, or a sister, become the participa-

[1] This appears in one of his interesting letters first published in the Literary Gazette, Oct. 20, 1821.

tors of his own tastes, the companions of his studies, and identify their happiness with his fame. A beautiful incident in the domestic life of literature is one which Morellet has revealed of MARMONTEL. In presenting his collected works to his wife, she discovered that the author had dedicated his volumes to herself; but the dedication was not made painful to her modesty, for it was not a public one. Nor was it so concise as to be mistaken for a compliment. The theme was copious, for the heart overflowed in the pages consecrated to her domestic virtues; and MARMONTEL left it as a record, that their children might learn the gratitude of their father, and know the character of their mother, when the writer should be no more. Many readers were perhaps surprised to find in NECKER'S *Compte rendu au roi*, a political and financial work, a great and lovely character of domestic excellence in his wife. This was more obtrusive than Marmontel's private dedication; yet it was not the less sincere. If NECKER failed in the cautious reserve of private feelings, who will censure? Nothing seems misplaced which the heart dictates.

If HORACE were dear to his friends, he declares they owed him to his father.

> ——————— purus et insons,
> (Ut me collaudem) si vivo et carus amicis,
> Causa fuit Pater his.
>
> If pure and innocent, if dear (forgive
> These little praises) to my friends I live,
> My father was the cause.

This intelligent father, an obscure tax-gatherer, discovered the propensity of Horace's mind; for he removed the boy of genius from a rural seclusion to the metropolis, anxiously attending on him to his various masters. GROTIUS, like Horace, celebrated in verse his gratitude to his excellent father, who had formed him not only to be a man of learning, but a great character. VITRUVIUS pours forth a grateful prayer to the memory of his parents, who had instilled into his soul a love for literary and philosophical subjects; and it is an amiable trait in PLUTARCH to have introduced his father in the Symposiacs, as an elegant critic and moralist, and his brother Lamprias, whose sweetness of disposition, inclining to cheerful raillery, the Sage of Cheronæa has immortalized. The father of GIBBON urged him to literary distinction, and the dedication of the "Essay on Literature" to that father, connected with his subsequent labour, shows the force of the excitement. The father of POPE lived long enough to witness his son's celebrity.

> " Tears such as tender fathers shed,
> Warm from my eyes descend,

For joy, to think when I am dead,
My son shall have mankind his Friend."

The son of BUFFON one day surprised his father by the sight of a column, which he had raised to the memory of his father's eloquent genius. "It will do you honour," observed the Gallic sage. And when that son in the revolution was led to the guillotine, he ascended in silence, so impressed with his father's fame, that he only told the people, "I am the son of Buffon!"

Fathers absorbed in their occupations can but rarely attract their offspring. The first durable impressions of our moral existence come from the mother. The first prudential wisdom to which Genius listens falls from her lips, and only her caresses can create the moments of tenderness. The earnest discernment of a mother's love survives in the imagination of manhood. The mother of Sir WILLIAM JONES, having formed a plan for the education of her son, withdrew from great connexions that she might live only for that son. Her great principle of education, was to excite by curiosity; the result could not fail to be knowledge. "Read, and you will know," she constantly replied to her filial pupil. And we have his own acknowledgment, that to this maxim, which produced the habit of study, he was indebted for his future attainments. KANT, the German metaphysician, was always fond of declaring that he owed to the ascendency of his mother's character the severe inflexibility of his moral principles. The mother of BURNS kindled his genius by reciting the old Scottish ballads, while to his father he attributed his less pleasing cast of character. Bishop WATSON traced to the affectionate influence of his mother, the religious feelings which he confesses he inherited from her. The mother of EDGEWORTH, confined through life to her apartment, was the only person who studied his constitutional volatility. When he hastened to her death-bed, the last imperfect accents of that beloved voice reminded him of the past and warned him of the future, and he declares, that voice "had a happy influence on his habits,"—as happy, at least, as his own volatile nature would allow. "To the manner in which my mother formed me at an early age," said Napoleon, "I principally owe my subsequent elevation. My opinion is, that the future good or bad conduct of a child entirely depends upon the mother."

There is this remarkable in the strong affections of the mother in the formation of the literary character, that, without even partaking of, or sympathising with the pleasures the child is

[1] These lines have been happily applied by Mr. BOWLES to the father of POPE. —The poet's domestic affections were as permanent as they were strong.

fond of, the mother will often cherish those first decided tastes merely from the delight of promoting the happiness of her son; so that that genius, which some would produce on a preconceived system, or implant by stratagem, or enforce by application, with her may be only the watchful labour of love. One of our most eminent antiquaries has often assured me that his great passion, and I may say his genius, for his curious knowledge and his vast researches, he attributes to maternal affection. When his early taste for these studies was thwarted by the very different one of his father's, the mother silently supplied her son with the sort of treasures he languished for, blessing the knowledge, which indeed she could not share with him, but which she beheld imparting happiness to her youthful antiquary.

There is, what may be called, FAMILY GENIUS. In the home of a man of genius is diffused an electrical atmosphere, and his own pre-eminence strikes out talents in all. "The active pursuits of my father," says the daughter of EDGEWORTH, "spread an animation through the house by connecting children with all that was going on, and allowing them to join in thought and conversation; sympathy and emulation excited mental exertion in the most agreeable manner." EVELYN, in his beautiful retreat at Saye's Court, had inspired his family with that variety of taste which he himself was spreading throughout the nation. His son translated Rapin's "Gardens," which poem the father proudly preserved in his "Sylva;" his lady, ever busied in his study, excelled in the arts her husband loved, and designed the frontispiece to his Lucretius: she was the cultivator of their celebrated garden, which served as "an example" of his great work on "forest trees." Cowley, who has commemorated Evelyn's love of books and gardens, has delightfully applied them to his lady, in whom, says the bard, Evelyn meets both pleasures:

> "The fairest garden in her looks,
> And in her mind the wisest books."

The house of HALLER resembled a temple consecrated to science and the arts, and the votaries were his own family. The universal acquirements of HALLER were possessed is some degree by every one under his roof; and their studious delight in transcribing manuscripts, in consulting authors, in botanising, drawing and colouring the plants under his eye, formed occupations which made the daughters happy and the sons eminent. The painter STELLA inspired his family to copy his fanciful inventions, and the playful graver of Claudine Stella, his niece, animated his "Sports of Children." I have seen a print of COYPEL in his *studio*, and by his side his little daughter, who is intensely watching the progress of her father's pencil. The artist

has represented himself in the act of suspending his labour to look on his child. At that moment, his thoughts were divided between two objects of his love. The character and the works of the late Elizabeth HAMILTON were formed entirely by her brother. Admiring the man she loved, she imitated what she admired; and while the brother was arduously completing the version of the Persian Hedaya, the sister, who had associated with his morning task and his evening conversations, was recalling all the ideas, and portraying her fraternal master in her "Hindoo Rajah."

Nor are there wanting instances where this FAMILY GENIUS has been carried down through successive generations: the volume of the father has been continued by a son, or a relative. The history of the family of the ZWINGERS is a combination of studies and inherited tastes. Theodore published, in 1697, a folio herbal, of which his son Frederic gave an enlarged edition in 1744; and the family was honoured by their name having been given to a genus of plants dedicated to their memory, and known in botany by the name of the *Zwingera*. In history and in literature, the family name was equally eminent; the same Theodore continued a great work, "The Theatre of Human Life," which had been begun by his father-in-law, and which for the third time was enlarged by another son. Among the historians of Italy, it is delightful to contemplate this family genius transmitting itself with unsullied probity among the three VILLANIS, and the MALASPINIS, and the two PORTAS. The history of the learned family of the STEPHENS presents a dynasty of literature; and to distinguish the numerous members, they have been designated as Henry I. and Henry II.,—as Robert I., the II., and the III. Our country may exult in having possessed many literary families—the WARTONS, the father and two sons; the BURNEYS, more in number; and the nephews of Milton, whose humble torch at least was lighted at the altar of the great bard.

No event in literary history is more impressive than the fate of QUINTILIAN; it was in the midst of his elaborate work, which was composed to form the literary character of a son, that he experienced the most terrible affliction in the domestic life of genius—the successive deaths of his wife and his only child. It was a moral earthquake with a single survivor amidst the ruins. An awful burst of parental and literary affliction breaks forth in Quintilian's lamentation,—"My wealth, and my writings, the fruits of a long and painful life, must now be reserved only for strangers; all I possess is for aliens, and no longer mine!" We feel the united agony of the husband, the father, and the man of genius!

Deprived of these social consolations, we see JOHNSON call about him those whose calamities exiled them from society, and his roof lodges the blind, the lame, and the poor; for the heart must possess something, it can call its own, to be kind to.

In domestic life, the Abbé DE ST. PIERRE enlarged its moral vocabulary, by fixing in his language two significant words. One served to explain the virtue most familiar to him—*bienfaisance;* and that irritable vanity which magnifies its ephemeral fame, the sage reduced to a mortifying diminutive—*la gloriole!*

It has often excited surprise that men of genius are not more reverenced than other men in their domestic circle. The disparity between the public and the private esteem of the same man is often striking. In privacy we discover that the comic genius is not always cheerful, that the sage is sometimes ridiculous, and the poet seldom delightful. The golden hour of invention must terminate like other hours, and when the man of genius returns to the cares, the duties, the vexations, and the amusements of life, his companions behold him as one of themselves—the creature of habits and infirmities.

In the business of life, the cultivators of science and the arts, with all their simplicity of feeling and generous openness about them, do not meet on equal terms with other men. Their frequent abstractions calling off the mind to whatever enters into its lonely pursuits, render them greatly inferior to others in practical and immediate observation. Studious men have been reproached as being so deficient in the knowledge of the human character, that they are usually disqualified for the management of public business. Their confidence in their friends has no bound, while they become the easy dupes of the designing. A friend, who was in office with the late Mr. CUMBERLAND, assures me, that he was so intractable to the forms of business, and so easily induced to do more or to do less than he ought, that he was compelled to perform the official business of this literary man, to free himself from his annoyance; and yet, CUMBERLAND could not be reproached with any deficiency in a knowledge of the human character, which he was always touching with caustic pleasantry.

ADDISON and PRIOR were unskilful statesmen; and MALESHERBES confessed, a few days before his death, that TURGOT and himself, men of genius and philosophers, from whom the nation had expected much, had badly administered the affairs of the state; for "knowing men but by books, and unskilful in business, we could not form the king to the government." A man of genius may know the whole map of the world of human nature; but like the great geographer, may be apt to be lost in

the wood which any one in the neighbourhood knows better than him

"The conversation of a poet," says Goldsmith, "is that of a man of sense, while his actions are those of a fool." Genius careless of the future, and often absent in the present, avoids too deep a commingling in the minor cares of life. Hence it becomes a victim to common fools and vulgar villains. "I love my family's welfare, but I cannot be so foolish as to make myself the slave to the minute affairs of a house," said MONTESQUIEU. The story told of a man of learning is probably true, however ridiculous it may appear. Deeply occupied in his library, one, rushing in, informed him that the house was on fire: "Go to my wife—these matters belong to her!" pettishly replied the interrupted student. BACON sat at one end of his table wrapt in many a reverie, while at the other the creatures about him were trafficking with his honour, and ruining his good name: "I am better fitted for this," said that great man once, holding out a book, "than for the life I have of late led. Nature has not fitted me for that; knowing myself by inward calling to be fitter to hold a book than to play a part."

BUFFON, who consumed his mornings in his old tower of Montbar, at the end of his garden, with all nature opening to him, formed all his ideas of what was passing before him from the arts of a pliant capuchin, and the comments of a perruquier on the scandalous chronicle of the village. These humble confidants he treated as children, but the children were commanding the great man! YOUNG, whose satires give the very anatomy of human foibles, was wholly governed by his housekeeper. She thought and acted for him, which probably greatly assisted the "Night Thoughts," but his curate exposed the domestic economy of a man of genius by a satirical novel. If I am truly informed, in that gallery of satirical portraits in his "Love of Fame," YOUNG has omitted one of the most striking—his OWN! While the poet's eye was glancing from "earth to heaven," he totally overlooked the lady whom he married, and who soon became the object of his contempt; and not only his wife, but his only son, who when he returned home for the vacation from Winchester school, was only admitted into the presence of his poetical father on the first and on the last day; and whose unhappy life is attributed to this unnatural neglect[1]:—a lamentable domestic catastrophe, which, I fear, has too frequently occurred amidst the ardour and occupations of literary glory. Much, too

[1] These facts are drawn from a manuscript of the late Sir Herbert Croft, who regretted that Dr. Johnson would not suffer him to give this account during the doctor's lifetime, in his life of Young, but which it had always been his intention to have added to it.

much, of the tender domesticity of life is violated by literary characters. All that lives under their eye, all that should be guided by their hand, the recluse and abstracted men of genius must leave to their own direction. But let it not be forgotten, that, if such neglect others, they also neglect themselves, and are deprived of those family enjoyments for which few men have warmer sympathies. While the literary character burns with the ambition of raising a great literary name, he is too often forbidden to taste of this domestic intercourse, or to indulge the versatile curiosity of his private amusements—for he is chained to his great labour. ROBERTSON felt this while employed on his histories, and he at length rejoiced when, after many years of devoted toil, he returned to the luxury of reading for his own amusement and to the conversation of his friends. "Such a sacrifice," observes his philosophical biographer, "must be more or less made by all who devote themselves to letters, whether with a view to emolument or to fame; nor would it perhaps be easy to make it, were it not for the prospect (seldom, alas! realised) of earning by their exertions that learned and honourable leisure, which he was so fortunate as to attain."

But men of genius have often been accused of imaginary crimes. Their very eminence attracts the lie of calumny, which tradition often conveys beyond the possibility of refutation. Sometimes they are reproached as wanting in affection, when they displease their fathers by making an obscure name celebrated. The family of DESCARTES lamented, as a blot in their escutcheon, that Descartes, who was born a gentleman, should become a philosopher; and this elevated genius was refused the satisfaction of embracing an unforgiving parent, while his dwarfish brother, with a mind diminutive as his person, ridiculed his philosophic relative and turned to advantage his philosophic disposition. The daughter of ADDISON was educated with a perfect contempt of authors, and blushed to bear a name more illustrious than that of all the Warwicks, on her alliance to which noble family she prided herself. The children of MILTON, far from solacing the age of their blind parent, became impatient for his death, embittered his last hours with scorn and disaffection, and combined to cheat and rob him. Milton, having enriched our national poetry by two immortal epics, with patient grief blessed the single female who did not entirely abandon him, and the obscure fanatic who was pleased with his poems because they were religious. What felicities! what laurels! And now we have recently learned, that the daughter of Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ lived on ill terms with her mother, of whose enchanting genius she appears to have been insensible. The unquestionable documents are two letters hitherto cautiously secreted. The daughter

was in the house of her mother, when an extraordinary letter was addressed to her from the chamber of Madame de Sévigné, after a sleepless night. In this she describes, with her peculiar felicity, the ill-treatment she received from the daughter she idolised; it is a kindling effusion of maternal reproach, and tenderness, and genius[1].

Some have been deemed disagreeable companions, because they felt the weariness of dulness, or the impertinence of intrusion; described as bad husbands, when united to women who, without a kindred feeling, had the mean art to prey upon their infirmities; or as bad fathers, because their offspring have not always reflected the moral beauty of their own page. But the magnet loses nothing of its virtue, even when the particles about it, incapable themselves of being attracted, are not acted on by its occult property.

CHAPTER XVII.

The poverty of literary men.—Poverty, a relative quality.—Of the poverty of literary men in what degree desirable.—Extreme poverty.—Task-work.—Of gratuitous works.—A project to provide against the worst state of poverty among literary men.

POVERTY is a state not so fatal to genius, as it is usually conceived to be. We shall find that it has been sometimes voluntarily chosen; and that to connect too closely great fortune with great genius, creates one of those powerful but unhappy alliances, where the one party must necessarily act contrary to the interests of the other.

Poverty is a relative quality, like cold and heat, which are but the increase or the diminution in our own sensations. The positive idea must arise from comparison. There is a state of poverty reserved even for the wealthy man, the instant that he comes in hateful contact with the enormous capitalist. But there is a poverty neither vulgar nor terrifying, asking no favours and on no terms receiving any; a poverty which annihilates its ideal evils, and, becoming even a source of pride, will confer independence, that first step to genius.

Among the continental nations, to accumulate wealth in the spirit of a capitalist, does not seem to form the prime object of domestic life. The traffic of money is with them left to the traffickers, their merchants, and their financiers. In our country, the commercial character has so closely interwoven and identified itself with the national one, and its peculiar views have so terminated all our pursuits, that every rank is alike influenced

[1] Lettres inédites de Madame de Sévigné, pp. 201 and 203.

by its spirit, and things are valued by a market-price, which naturally admit of no such appraisement. In a country where "The Wealth of Nations" has been fixed as the first principle of political existence, wealth has raised an aristocracy more noble than nobility, more celebrated than genius, more popular than patriotism; but however it may partake at times of a generous nature, it hardly looks beyond its own narrow pale. It is curious to notice that Montesquieu, who was in England, observed, that "If I had been born here, nothing could have consoled me in failing to accumulate a large fortune; but I do not lament the mediocrity of my circumstances in France." The sources of our national wealth have greatly multiplied, and the evil has consequently increased, since the visit of the great philosopher.

The cares of property, the daily concerns of a family, the pressure of such minute disturbers of their studies, have induced some great minds to regret the abolition of those monastic orders, beneath whose undisturbed shade were produced the mighty labours of a MONTFAUCON, a CALMET, a FLOREZ, and the still unfinished volumes of the BENEDICTINES. Often has the literary character, amidst the busied delights of study, sighed "to bid a farewell sweet" to the turbulence of society. It was not discontent, nor any undervaluing of general society, but the pure enthusiasm of the library, which once induced the studious EVELYN to sketch a retreat of this nature, which he addressed to his friend, the illustrious BOYLE. He proposed to form "A college where persons of the same turn of mind might enjoy the pleasure of agreeable society, and at the same time pass their days without care or interruption [1]. This abandonment of their life to their genius has, indeed, often cost them too dear, from the days of SOPHOCLES, who, ardent in his old age, neglected his family affairs, and was brought before his judges by his relations, as one fallen into a second childhood. The aged poet brought but one solitary witness in his favour—an unfinished tragedy; which having read, the judges rose before him, and retorted the charge on his accusers.

A parallel circumstance occurred to the Abbé COTIN, the victim of a rhyme of the satirical Boileau. Studious, and without fortune, Cotin had lived contented till he incurred the unhappi-

[1] This romantic literary retreat is one of those delightful reveries which the elegant taste of EVELYN abounded with. It may be found at full length in the fifth volume of Boyle's Works, not in the second, as the Biog. Brit. says. His lady was to live among the society. "If I and my wife take up two apartments, for we are to be decently asunder, however I stipulate, and her inclination will greatly suit with it, that shall be no impediment to the society, but a considerable advantage to the economic part." etc.

ness of inheriting a large estate. Then a world of cares opened on him; his rents were not paid, and his creditors increased. Dragged from his Hebrew and Greek, poor Cotin resolved to make over his entire fortune to one of his heirs, on condition of maintenance. His other relations assuming that a man who parted with his estate in his lifetime must necessarily be deranged, brought the learned Cotin into court. Cotin had nothing to say in his own favour, but requested his judges would allow him to address them from the sermons which he preached. The good sense, the sound reasoning, and the erudition of the preacher were such, that the whole bench unanimously declared that they themselves might be considered as madmen, were they to condemn a man of letters who was desirous of escaping from the incumbrance of a fortune which had only interrupted his studies.

There may then be sufficient motives to induce such a man to make a state of mediocrity his choice. If he lose his happiness, he mutilates his genius. GOLDONI, with all the simplicity of his feelings and habits, in reviewing his life, tells us how he was always relapsing into his old propensity of comic writing; "but the thought of this does not disturb me," says he; "for though in any other situation I might have been in easier circumstances, I should never have been so happy." BAYLE is a parent of the modern literary character; he pursued the same course, and early in life adopted the principle "Neither to fear bad fortune, nor have any ardent desires for good." Acquainted with the passions only as their historian, and living only for literature, he sacrificed to it the two great acquisitions of human pursuits, fortune and a family: but in what country had Bayle not a family and a possession in his fame! HUME and GIBBON had the most perfect conception of the literary character, and they were aware of this important principle in its habits: "My own revenue," said HUME, will be sufficient for a man of letters, who surely needs less money, both for his entertainment and credit, than other people." GIBBON observed of himself, "Perhaps the golden mediocrity of my fortune has contributed to fortify my application."

The state of poverty, then, desirable in the domestic life of genius, is one in which the cares of property never intrude, and the want of wealth is never perceived. This is not indigence; that state which, however dignified the man of genius himself may be, must inevitably degrade! for the heartless will gibe, and even the compassionate turn aside in contempt. This literary outcast will soon be forsaken even by himself! his own intellect will be clouded over, and his limbs shrink in the palsy of bodily misery and shame:—

" Malesuada Fames, et turpis Egestas
Terribiles visu formæ.

Not that in this history of men of genius, we are without illustrious examples of those who have even *learnt to want*, that they might emancipate their genius from their necessities!

We see ROUSSEAU rushing out of the palace of the financier, selling his watch, copying music by the sheet, and by the mechanical industry of two hours purchasing ten for genius. We may smile at the enthusiasm of young BARRY, who finding himself too constant a haunter of taverns, imagined that this expenditure of time was occasioned by having money; and to put an end to the conflict, he threw the little he possessed at once into the Liffey; but let us not forget that BARRY, in the maturity of life, confidently began a labour of years, and one of the noblest inventions in his art, a great poem in a picture, with no other resource than what he found by secret labours through the night, in furnishing the shops with those slight and saleable sketches which secured uninterrupted mornings for his genius. SPINOSA, a name as celebrated, and perhaps as calumniated, as Epicurus, lived in all sorts of abstinence, even of honours, of pensions, and of presents; which, however disguised by kindness, he would not accept, so fearful was this philosopher of a chain! Lodging in a cottage, and obtaining a livelihood by polishing optical glasses, he declared he had never spent more than he earned, and certainly thought there was such a thing as superfluous earnings. At his death his small accounts showed how he had subsisted on a few pence a-day, and

" Enjoy'd, spare feast! a radish and an egg."

POUSSIN persisted in refusing a higher price than that affixed to the back of his pictures, at the time he was living without a domestic. The great oriental scholar, ANQUETIL DE PERRON, is a recent example of the literary character carrying his indifference to privations to the very cynicism of poverty; and he seems to exult over his destitution with the same pride as others would expatiate over their possessions. Yet, we must not forget, to use the words of Lord Bacon, that " judging that means were to be spent upon learning, and not learning to be applied to means," DE PERRON refused the offer of thirty thousand livres for his copy of the Zend-avesta. Writing to some Bramins, he describes his life at Paris to be much like their own. " I subsist on the produce of my literary labours without revenue, establishment, or place. I have no wife nor children; alone, absolutely free, but always the friend of men of probity. In a perpetual war with my senses, I triumph over the attractions of the world or I contemn them."

This ascetic existence is not singular. PARINI, a great modern poet of Italy, whom the Milanese point out to strangers as the glory of their city, lived in the same state of unrepining poverty. Mr. Hobhouse has given us this self-portrait of the poet:—

> "Me, non nato a percotere
> Le dure illustri porte,
> Nudo accorrà, ma libero
> Il regno della morte."

Naked, but free! A life of hard deprivations was long that of the illustrious LINNÆUS. Without fortune, to that great mind it never seemed necessary to acquire any. Peregrinating on foot with a stylus, a magnifying-glass, and a basket for plants, he shared the rustic meal of the peasant. Never was glory obtained at a cheaper rate! exclaims one of his eulogists. Satisfied with the least of the little, he only felt one perpetual want—that of completing his Floras. Not that LINNÆUS was insensible to his situation, for he gave his name to a little flower in Lapland—the *Linnæa Borealis,* from the fanciful analogy he discovered between its character and his own early fate, "a little northern plant flowering early, depressed, abject, and long overlooked." The want of fortune, however, did not deprive this man of genius of his true glory, nor of that statue raised to him in the gardens of the University of Upsal, nor of that solemn eulogy delivered by a crowned head, nor of those medals which his nation struck to commemorate the genius of the three kingdoms of nature!

This, then, is the race who have often smiled at the light regard of their good neighbours when contrasted with their own celebrity; for in poverty and in solitude such men are not separated from their fame; that is ever proceeding, ever raising a secret, but constant, triumph in their minds.

Yes! Genius, undegraded and unexhausted, may, indeed, even in a garret glow in its career; but it must be on the principle which induced ROUSSEAU solemnly to renounce writing "par métier." This in the *Journal des Sçavans* he once attempted, but found himself quite inadequate to "the profession[1]." In a garret, the author of the "Studies of Nature," as he exultingly tells us, arranged his work. "It was in a little garret, in the new street of St. Etienne du Mont, where I resided four years, in the midst of physical and domestic afflictions. But there I enjoyed the most exquisite pleasures of my life, amid profound solitude and an enchanting horizon. There I put the

[1] Twice he repeated this resolution. See his Works, vol. xxxi. p. 283; vol. xxxii. p. 90.

finishing hand to my 'Studies of Nature,' and there I published them." Pope, one day taking his usual walk with Harte in the Haymarket, desired him to enter a little shop, where going up three pair of stairs into a small room, Pope said, "In this garret ADDISON wrote his 'Campaign!'" To the feelings of the poet this garret had become a consecrated spot; Genius seemed more itself, placed in contrast with its miserable locality!

The man of genius wrestling with oppressive fortune, who follows the avocations of an author as a precarious source of existence, should take as the model of the authorial life, that of Dr. JOHNSON. The dignity of the literary character was as deeply associated with his feelings, and the "reverence thyself" as present to his mind, when doomed to be one of the *Helots* of literature, by Osborn, Cave, and Miller, as when, in the honest triumph of Genius, he repelled a tardy adulation of the lordly Chesterfield. Destitute of this ennobling principle, the author sinks into the tribe of those rabid adventurers of the pen, who have masked the degraded form of the literary character under the assumed title of authors by profession[1]"—the GUTHRIES, the RALPHS, and the AMHURSTS. "There are worse evils, for the literary man," says a living author, who himself is the true model of the great literary character, "than neglect, poverty, imprisonment, and death. There are even more pitiable objects than Chatterton himself with the poison at his lips."—"I should die with hunger, were I at peace with the world!" exclaimed a corsair of literature,—and dashed his pen into the black flood before him of soot and gall.

In substituting fortune for the object of his designs, the man of genius deprives himself of those heats of inspiration reserved for him who lives for himself; the *mollia tempora fandi* of Art. If he be subservient to the public taste, without daring to raise it to his own, the creature of his times has not the choice of his subjects, which choice is itself a sort of invention. A task-worker ceases to think his own thoughts. The stipulated price and time are weighing on his pen or his pencil, while the hour-glass is dropping its hasty sands. If the man of genius would be wealthy and even luxurious, another fever besides the thirst of glory torments him. Such insatiable desires create many fears, and a mind in fear is a mind in slavery. In one of SHAKESPEARE'S sonnets he pathetically laments this compulsion of his necessities which forced him to the trade of pleasing the public; and he

[1] From an original letter which I have published from GUTHRIE to a minister of state, this modern phrase appears to have been his own invention. The principle unblushingly avowed, required the sanction of a respectable designation. I have preserved it in "Calamities of Authors."

illustrates this degradation by a novel image. "Chide Fortune," cries the bard,—

> "The guilty goddess of my harmless deeds,
> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds;
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;
> *And almost thence my nature is subdued*
> *To what it works in,* LIKE THE DYER'S HAND."

Such is the fate of that author, who, in his variety of task-works, blue, yellow, and red, lives without ever having shown his own natural complexion. We hear the eloquent truth from one who has alike shared in the bliss of composition, and the misery of its "daily bread." "A single hour of composition won from the business of the day, is worth more than the whole day's toil of him who works at the *trade of literature*: in the one case, the spirit comes joyfully to refresh itself, like a hart to the water-brooks; in the other, it pursues its miserable way, panting and jaded with the dogs of hunger and necessity behind[1]." We trace the fate of all task-work in the history of POUSSIN, when called on to reside at the French court. Labouring without intermission, sometimes on one thing and sometimes on another, and hurried on in things which required both time and thought, he saw too clearly the fatal tendency of such a life, and exclaimed with ill-suppressed bitterness, "If I stay long in this country, I shall turn dauber like the rest here." The great artist abruptly returned to Rome to regain the possession of his own thoughts.

It has been a question with some, more indeed abroad than at home, whether the art of instructing mankind by the press would not be less suspicious in its character, were it less interested in one of its prevalent motives? Some noble self-denials of this kind are recorded. The principle of emolument will produce the industry which furnishes works for popular demand; but it is only the principle of honour which can produce the lasting works of genius. BOILEAU seems to censure RACINE for having accepted money for one of his dramas, while he, who was not rich, gave away his polished poems to the public. He seems desirous of raising the art of writing to a more disinterested profession than any other, requiring no fees for the professors. OLIVET presented his elaborate edition of Cicero to the world, requiring no other remuneration than its glory. MILTON did not compose his immortal work for his trivial copyright; and LINNÆUS sold his labours for a single ducat. The Abbé MABLY, the author of many political and moral works, lived on little,

[1] Quarterly Review, vol. viii. p. 538.

and would accept only a few presentation copies from the booksellers. But, since we have become a nation of book-collectors, and since there exists, as Mr. Coleridge describes it, "a reading public," this principle of honour is altered. Wealthy and even noble authors are proud to receive the largest tribute to their genius, because this tribute is the certain evidence of the number who pay it. The property of a book, therefore, represents to the literary candidate the collective force of the thousands of voters on whose favour his claims can only exist. This change in the affairs of the literary republic, in our country, was felt by GIBBON, who has fixed on "the patronage of booksellers" as the standard of public opinion: "the measure of their liberality," he says, "is the least ambiguous test of our common success." The philosopher accepted it as a substitute for that "friendship or favour of princes, of which he could not boast." The same opinion was held by JOHNSON. Yet, looking on the present state of English literature, the most profuse, perhaps, in Europe, we cannot refrain from thinking, that the "patronage of booksellers" is frequently injurious to the great interests of literature.

The dealers in enormous speculative purchases are only subservient to the spirit of the times. If they are the purveyors, they are also the panders of public taste; and their vaunted patronage only extends to popular subjects; while their urgent demands are sure to produce hasty manufactures. A precious work on a recondite subject, which may have consumed the life of its author, no bookseller can patronise; and whenever such a work is published, the author has rarely survived the long season of the public's neglect. While popular works, after some few years of celebrity, have at length been discovered not worth the repairs nor the renewal of their lease of fame, the neglected work of a nobler design rises in value and rarity. The literary work which requires the greatest skill and difficulty, and the longest labour, is not commercially valued with that hasty, spurious novelty, for which the taste of the public is craving, from the strength of its disease rather than of its appetite. ROUSSEAU observed, that his musical opera, the work of five or six weeks, brought him as much money as he had received for his "Emile," which had cost him twenty years of meditation, and three years of composition. This single fact represents a hundred. So fallacious are public opinion, and the patronage of booksellers!

Such, then, is the inadequate remuneration of a life devoted to literature; and notwithstanding the more general interest excited by its productions within the last century, it has not essentially altered their situation in society; for who is deceived by the trivial exultation of the gay sparkling scribbler who lately assured us that authors now dip their pens in silver ink-stan-

dishes, and have a valet for an amanuensis? Fashionable writers must necessarily get out of fashion; it is the inevitable fate of the material and the manufacturer. An eleemosynary fund can provide no permanent relief for the age and sorrows of the unhappy men of science and literature; and an author may even have composed a work which shall be read by the next generation as well as the present, and still be left in a state even of pauperism. These victims perish in silence! No one has attempted to suggest even a palliative for this great evil; and when I asked the greatest genius of our age to propose some relief for this general suffering, a sad and convulsive nod, a shrug that sympathised with the misery of so many brothers, and an avowal that even he could not invent one, was all that genius had to alleviate the forlorn state of the literary character[1].

The only man of genius who has thrown out a hint for improving the situation of the literary man, is ADAM SMITH. In that passage in his "Wealth of Nations" to which I have already referred, he says, that "Before the invention of the art of printing, the only employment by which a man of letters could make anything by his talents was that of a *public or a private teacher*, or by communicating to other people the various and useful knowledge which he had acquired himself; and this surely is a more honourable, a more useful, and in general even a more profitable employment than that other *of writing for a bookseller*, to which the art of printing has given occasion." We see the political economist, alike insensible to the dignity of the literary character, incapable of taking a just view of its glorious avocation. To obviate the personal wants attached to the occupations of an author, he would, more effectually than skilfully, get rid of authorship itself. This is not to restore the limb, but to amputate it. It is not the preservation of existence, but its annihilation. His friends Hume and Robertson must have turned from this page humiliated and indignant. They could have supplied Adam Smith with a truer conception of the literary character, of its independence, its influence, and its glory.

I have projected a plan for the alleviation of the state of those authors who are not blessed with a patrimony. The *trade* connected with literature is carried on by men who are usually not literate, and the generality of the publishers of books, unlike all other tradesmen, are often the worst judges of their own wares. Were it practicable, as I believe it to be, that authors and men of letters could themselves be booksellers, the public would derive this immediate benefit from the scheme; a deluge

[1] It was the late Sir WALTER SCOTT—if I could assign the *date* of this conversation, it would throw some light on what might be then passing in his own mind.

of worthless or indifferent books would be turned away, and the name of the literary publisher would be a pledge for the value of every new book. Every literary man would choose his own favourite department, and we should learn from him as well as from his books.

Against this project it may be urged, that literary men are ill adapted to attend to the regular details of trade, and that the great capitalists in the book-business have not been men of literature. But this plan is not suggested for accumulating a great fortune, or for the purpose of raising up a new class of tradesmen. It is not designed to make authors wealthy, for that would inevitably extinguish great literary exertion, but only to make them independent, as the best means to preserve exertion. The details of trade are not even to reach him. The poet GESNER, a bookseller, left his *librairie* to the care of his admirable wife. His own works, the elegant editions which issued from his press, and the value of manuscripts, were the objects of his attention.

On the Continent many of the dealers in books have been literary men. At the memorable expulsion of the French Protestants on the edict of Nantes, their expatriated literary men flew to the shores of England, and the free provinces of Holland; and it was in Holland that this colony of *littérateurs* established magnificent printing-houses, and furnished Europe with editions of the native writers of France, often preferable to the originals, and even wrote the best works of that time. At that memorable period in our own history, when two thousand non-conformists were ejected on St. Bartholomew's day from the national establishment, the greater part were men of learning, who, deprived of their livings, were destitute of any means of existence. These scholars were compelled to look to some profitable occupation, and for the greater part they fixed on trades connected with literature; some became eminent booksellers, and continued to be voluminous writers, without finding their studies interrupted by their commercial arrangements. The details of trade must be left to others; the hand of a child can turn a vast machine, and the object here proposed would be lost, if authors sought to become merely booksellers.

Whenever the public of Europe shall witness such a new order of men among their booksellers, they will have less to read, but more to remember. Their opinions will be less fluctuating, and their knowledge will come to them with more maturity. Men of letters will fly to the house of the bookseller who in that class of literature in which he deals, will himself be not the least eminent member.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The matrimonial state of literature.—Matrimony said not to be well suited to the domestic life of genius.—Celibacy a concealed cause of the early querulousness of men of genius.—Of unhappy unions.—Not absolutely necessary that the wife should be a literary woman.—Of the docility and susceptibility of the higher female character.—A picture of a literary wife.

MATRIMONY has often been considered as a condition not well suited to the domestic life of genius, accompanied as it must be by many embarrassments for the head and the heart. It was an axiom with Fuessli, the Swiss artist, that the marriage state is incompatible with a high cultivation of the fine arts; and such appears to have been the feeling of most artists. When MICHAEL ANGELO was asked why he did not marry, he replied, "I have espoused my art; and it occasions me sufficient domestic cares, for my works shall be my children. What would Bartholomeo Ghiberti have been, had he not made the gates of St. John? His children consumed his fortune, but his gates, worthy to be the gates of Paradise, remain." The three Caraccis refused the conjugal bond on the same principle, dreading the interruptions of domestic life. Their crayons and paper were always on their dining-table. Careless of fortune, they determined never to hurry over their works in order that they might supply the ceaseless demands of a family. We discover the same principle operating in our own times. When a young painter, who had just married, told Sir Joshua that he was preparing to pursue his studies in Italy, that great painter exclaimed, "Married! then you are ruined as an artist!"

The same principle has influenced literary men. Sir THOMAS BODLEY had a smart altercation with his first librarian, insisting that he should not marry, maintaining its absurdity in the man who had the perpetual care of a public library; and Woodward left as one of the express conditions of his lecturer, that he was not to be a married man. They imagined that their private affairs would interfere with their public duties. PEIRESC, the great French collector, refused marriage, convinced that the cares of a family were too absorbing for the freedom necessary to literary pursuits, and claimed likewise a sacrifice of fortune incompatible with his great designs. BOYLE, who would not suffer his studies to be interrupted by "household affairs," lived as a boarder with his sister, Lady Ranelagh. Newton, Locke, Leibnitz, Bayle, and Hobbes, and Hume, and Gibbon, and Adam Smith, decided for celibacy. These great authors placed their happiness in their celebrity.

This debate, for the present topic has sometimes warmed into one, is in truth ill adapted for controversy. The heart is more concerned in its issue than any espoused doctrine terminating in partial views. Look into the domestic annals of genius—observe the variety of positions into which the literary character is thrown in the nuptial state. Cynicism will not always obtain a sullen triumph, nor prudence always be allowed to calculate away some of the richer feelings of our nature. It is not an axiom that literary characters must necessarily institute a new order of celibacy. The sentence of the apostle pronounces that "the forbidding to marry is a doctrine of devils." WESLEY, who published "Thoughts on a Single Life," advised some "to remain single for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but the precept," he adds, "is not for the many." So indecisive have been the opinions of the most curious inquirers concerning the matrimonial state, whenever a great destination has engaged their consideration.

One position we may assume, that the studies, and even the happiness of the pursuits of men of genius, are powerfully influenced by the domestic associate of their lives.

They rarely pass through the age of love without its passion. Even their Delias and their Amandas are often the shadows of some real object; for as Shakespeare's experience told him,

> "Never durst poet touch a pen to write,
> Until his ink were temper'd with love's sighs."

Their imagination is perpetually colouring those pictures of domestic happiness on which they delight to dwell. He who is no husband sighs for that tenderness which is at once bestowed and received; and tears will start in the eyes of him who, in becoming a child among children, yet feels that he is no father! These deprivations have usually been the concealed cause of the querulous melancholy of the literary character.

Such was the real occasion of SHENSTONE'S unhappiness. In early life he had been captivated by a young lady adapted to be both the muse and the wife of the poet, and their mutual sensibility lasted for some years. It lasted until she died. It was in parting from her that he first sketched his "Pastoral Ballad." SHENSTONE had the fortitude to refuse marriage. His spirit could not endure that she should participate in that life of self-privations to which he was doomed; but his heart was not locked up in the ice of celibacy, and his plaintive love-songs and elegies flowed from no fictitious source. "It is long since," says he, "I have considered myself as *undone*. The world will not perhaps consider me in that light entirely till I have married my maid."

THOMSON met a reciprocal passion in his Amanda, while the full tenderness of his heart was ever wasting itself like waters in a desert. As we have been made little acquainted with this part of the history of the poet of the Seasons, I shall give his own description of those deep feelings from a manuscript letter written to Mallet. "To turn my eyes a softer way, to you know who—absence sighs it to me. What is my heart made of? a soft system of low nerves, too sensible for my quiet—capable of being very happy or very unhappy, I am afraid the last will prevail. Lay your hand upon a kindred heart, and despise me not. I know not what it is, but she dwells upon my thought in a mingled sentiment, which is the sweetest, the most intimately pleasing the soul can receive, and which I would wish never to want towards some dear object or another. To have always some secret darling idea to which one can still have recourse amidst the noise and nonsense of the world, and which never fails to touch us in the most exquisite manner, is an art of happiness that fortune cannot deprive us of. This may be called romantic; but whatever the cause is, the effect is really felt. Pray, when you write, tell me when you saw her, and with the pure eye of a friend, when you see her again, whisper that I am her most humble servant."

Even POPE was enamoured of a "scornful lady;" and, as Johnson observed, "polluted his will with female resentment." Johnson himself, we are told by one who knew him, "had always a metaphysical passion for one princess or other,—the rustic Lucy Porter, or the haughty Molly Aston, or the sublimated methodistic Hill Boothby; and, lastly, the more charming Mrs. Thrale." Even in his advanced age, at the height of his celebrity, we hear his cries of lonely wretchedness. "I want every comfort; my life is very solitary and very cheerless. Let me know that I have yet a friend—let us be kind to one another." But the "kindness" of distant friends is like the polar sun—too far removed to warm us. Those who have eluded the individual tenderness of the female, are tortured by an aching void in their feelings. The stoic AKENSIDE, in his "Odes," has preserved the history of a life of genius in a series of his own feelings. One entitled, "At Study," closes with these memorable lines:—

"Me though no peculiar fair
Touches with a lover's care;
Though the pride of my desire
Asks immortal friendship's name,
Asks the palm of honest fame
And the old heroic lyre;
Though the day have smoothly gone,
Or to letter'd leisure known,

Or in social duty spent;
Yet at the eve my lonely breast
Seeks in vain for perfect rest,
Languishes for true content."

If ever a man of letters lived in a state of energy and excitement which might raise him above the atmosphere of social love, it was assuredly the enthusiast, THOMAS HOLLIS, who, solely devoted to literature and to republicanism, was occupied in furnishing Europe and America with editions of his favourite authors. He would not marry, lest marriage should interrupt the labours of his platonic politics. But his extraordinary memoirs, while they show an intrepid mind in a robust frame, bear witness to the self-tormentor who had trodden down the natural bonds of domestic life. Hence the deep "dejection of his spirits;" those incessant cries, that he has "no one to advise, assist, or cherish those magnanimous pursuits in him." At length he retreated into the country, in utter hopelessness. "I go not into the country for attentions to agriculture as such, nor attentions of interest of any kind, which I have ever despised as such; but as a *used man,* to pass the remainder of a life in tolerable sanity and quiet, after having given up the flower of it, voluntarily, day, week, month, year after year, successive to each other, to public service, and being no longer able to sustain, in *body or mind,* the labours that I have chosen to go through without falling speedily into *the greatest disorders,* and it might be *imbecility itself.* This is not colouring, but the exact plain truth."

"Poor moralist, and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets."

Assuredly it would not have been a question whether these literary characters should have married, had not MONTAIGNE, when a widower, declared that "he would not marry a second time, though it were wisdom itself;" but the airy Gascon has not disclosed how far *Madame* was concerned in this anathema.

If the literary man unite himself to a woman whose taste and whose temper are adverse to his pursuits, he must courageously prepare for a martyrdom. Should a female mathematician be united to a poet, it is probable that she would be left amidst her abstractions, to demonstrate to herself how many a specious diagram fails when brought into its mechanical operation; or discovering the infinite varieties of a curve, she might take occasion to deduce her husband's versatility. If she become as jealous of his books as other wives might be of his mistresses, she may

act the virago even over his innocent papers. The wife of Bishop COOPER, while her husband was employed on his Lexicon, one day consigned the volume of many years to the flames, and obliged that scholar to begin a second siege of Troy in a second Lexicon. The wife of WHITELOCKE often destroyed his MSS., and the marks of her nails have come down to posterity in the numerous *lacerations* still gaping in his "Memorials." The learned Sir HENRY SAVILLE, who devoted more than half his life, and nearly ten thousand pounds, to his magnificent edition of St. Chrysostom, led a very uneasy life between the saint and her ladyship. What with her tenderness for him, and her own want of amusement, Saint Chrysostom, it appears, incurred more than one danger.

Genius has not preserved itself from the errors and infirmities of matrimonial connexions. The energetic character of DANTE could neither soften nor control the asperity of his lady; and when that great poet lived in exile, she never cared to see him more, though he was the father of her six children. The internal state of the house of DOMENICHINO afflicted that great artist with many sorrows. He had married a beauty of high birth, and extreme haughtiness, and of the most avaricious disposition. When at Naples, he himself dreaded lest the avaricious passion of his wife should not be able to resist the offers she received to poison him, and he was compelled to provide and dress his own food. It is believed that he died of poison. What a picture has Passeri left of the domestic interior of this great artist! *Così fra mille crepacuori morì uno de' più eccellenti artefici del mundo; che oltre al suo valore pittorico avrebbe più d' ogni altri maritato di viver sempre per l' onestà personale.* "So perished, amidst a thousand heart-breakings, the most excellent of artists; who besides his worth as a painter, deserved as much as any one to have lived for his excellence as a man."

MILTON carried nothing of the greatness of his mind in the choice of his wifes. His first wife was the object of sudden fancy. He left the metropolis, and unexpectedly returned a married man, and united to a woman of such uncongenial dispositions, that the romp was frightened at the literary habits of the great poet, found his house solitary, beat his nephews, and ran away after a single month's residence! To this circumstance we owe his famous treatise on Divorce; and a party (by no means extinct), who having made as ill choices in their wives, were for divorcing, as fast as they had been for marrying, calling themselves *Miltonists*.

When we find that MOLIERE, so skilful in human life, married a girl from his own troop, who made him experience all those

bitter disgusts and ridiculous embarrassments which he himself played off at the theatre; that ADDISON's fine taste in morals and in life could suffer the ambition of a courtier to prevail with himself to seek a countess, whom he describes under the stormy character of Oceana, and who drove him contemptuously into solitude, and shortened his days; and that STEELE, warm and thoughtless, was united to a cold precise "Miss Prue," as he himself calls her, and from whom he never parted without bickerings; in all these cases we censuré the great men, not their wives[1]. ROUSSEAU has honestly confessed his error. He had united himself to a low illiterate woman; and when he retreated into solitude, he felt the weight which he carried with him. He laments that he had not educated his wife: "In a docile age, I could have adorned her mind with talents and knowledge, which would have more closely united us in retirement. We should not then have felt the intolerable tedium of a tête-à-tête; it is in solitude one feels the advantage of living with another who can think." Thus Rousseau confesses the fatal error, and indicates the right principle.

Yet it seems not absolutely necessary for the domestic happiness of the literary character, that his wife should be a literary woman. TYCHO BRAHE, noble by birth as well as genius, married the daughter of a peasant. By which means that great man obtained two points essential for his abstract pursuits; he acquired an obedient wife, and freed himself of his noble relatives, who would no longer hold an intercourse with the man who was spreading their family honours into more ages than perhaps they could have traced them backwards. The lady of WIELAND was a pleasing domestic person, who, without reading her husband's works, knew he was a great poet. Wieland was apt to exercise his imagination in declamatory invectives and bitter amplifications; and the writer of this account, in perfect German taste, assures us, "that many of his felicities of diction were thus struck out at a heat." During this frequent operation of his genius, the placable temper of Mrs. Wieland overcame the orgasm of the German bard, merely by persisting in her admiration and her patience. When the burst was over, Wieland himself was so charmed by her docility, that he usually closed with giving up all his opinions.

There is another sort of homely happiness, aptly described in the plain words of BISHOP NEWTON. He found "the study of sacred and classic authors ill agreed with butchers' and bakers' bills;" and when the prospect of a bishopric opened on him, "more servants, more entertainments, a better table, etc." it

[1] See "Curiosities of Literature," for anecdotes of "Literary Wives."

became necessary to look out for "some clever sensible woman to be his wife, who would lay out his money to the best advantage, and be careful and tender of his health; a friend and companion at all hours, and who would be happier in staying at home than be perpetually gadding abroad." Such are the wives not adapted to be the votaries, but who may be the faithful companions through life, even of a man of genius.

But in the character of the higher female we may discover a constitutional faculty of docility and enthusiasm, which has varied with the genius of different ages. It is the opinion of an elegant metaphysician, that the mind of the female adopts and familiarises itself with ideas more easily than that of man, and hence the facility with which the sex contract or lose habits, and accommodate their minds to new situations. Politics, war, and learning, are equally objects of attainment to their delightful susceptibility. Love has the fancied transparency of the cameleon. When the art of government directed the feelings of a woman, we behold Aspasia, eloquent with the genius of Pericles, instructing the Archons; Portia, the wife of the republican Brutus, devouring burning coals; and the wife of Lucan, transcribing and correcting the Pharsalia, before the bust of the poet, which she had placed on her bed, that his very figure might never be absent. When universities were opened to the sex, they acquired academic glory. The wives of military men have shared in the perils of the field; or like Anna Comnena and our Mrs. Hutchinson, have become even their historians. In the age of love and sympathy, the female often receives an indelible pliancy from her literary associate. His pursuits become the objects of her thoughts, and he observes his own taste reflected in his family; much less through his own influence, for his solitary labours often preclude him from forming them, than by that image of his own genius—the mother of his children! The subjects, the very books which enter into his literary occupation, are cherished by her imagination; a feeling finely opened by the lady of the author of Sandford and Merton: "My ideas of my husband," she said, "are so much associated with his *books,* that to part with them would be as it were breaking some of the last ties which still connect me with so beloved an object. The being in the midst of books he has been accustomed to read, and which contain his *marks* and *notes,* will still give him *a sort of existence* with *me.* Unintelligible as such fond chimeras may appear to many people, I am persuaded they are not so to you."

With what simplicity Meta Mollers, the wife of Klopstock, in her German-English, describes to Richardson, the novelist, the manner in which she passes her day with her poet! she tells

him, that "she is always present at the birth of the young verses, which begin by fragments, here and there, of a subject with which his soul is just then filled. Persons who live as we do, have no need of two chambers; we are always in the same: I with my little work, still! still! only regarding sometimes my husband's face, which is so venerable at that time with tears of devotion, and all the sublimity of the subject—my husband reading me his young verses, and suffering my criticisms."

The picture of a literary wife of antiquity has descended to us, touched by the domestic pencil of genius, in the susceptible CALPHURNIA, the lady of the younger PLINY. "Her affection for me," he says, "has given her a turn to books: her passion will increase with our days, for it is not my youth or my person, which time gradually impairs, but my reputation and my glory, of which she is enamoured."

I have been told that BUFFON, notwithstanding his favourite seclusion of his old tower in his garden, acknowledged to a friend, that his lady had a considerable influence over his compositions: "Often," said he, "when I cannot please myself, and am impatient at the disappointment, Madame de Buffon reanimates my exertion, or withdraws me to repose for a short interval; I return to my pen refreshed, and aided by her advice."

GESSNER declared that whatever were his talents, the person who had most contributed to develop them was his wife. She is unknown to the public; but the history of the mind of such a woman is discovered in the "Letters of Gessner and his Family." While GESSNER gave himself up entirely to his favourite arts, drawing, painting, etching, and poetry, his wife would often reanimate a genius that was apt to despond in its attempts, and often exciting him to new productions, her sure and delicate taste was attentively consulted by the poet-painter—but she combined the most practical good sense with the most feeling imagination. This forms the rareness of the character; for this same woman, who united with her husband in the education of their children, to relieve him from the interruptions of common business, carried on alone the concerns of his house in *la librairie*. Her correspondence with her son, a young artist travelling for his studies, opens what an old poet comprehensively terms "a gathered mind."—Imagine a woman attending to the domestic economy, and to the commercial details, yet withdrawing out of this business of life into the more elevated pursuits of her husband, and at the same time combining with all this the cares and counsels which she bestowed on her son to form the artist and the man.

To know this incomparable woman we must hear her. "Consider your father's precepts as oracles of wisdom; they

are the result of the experience he has collected, not only of life, but of that art which he has acquired simply by his own industry." She would not have her son suffer his strong affection to herself to absorb all other sentiments. "Had you remained at home, and been habituated under your mother's auspices to employments merely domestic, what advantage would you have acquired? I own we should have passed some delightful winter evenings together; but your love for the arts, and my ambition to see my sons as much distinguished for their talents as their virtues, would have been a constant source of regret at your passing your time in a manner so little worthy of you."

How profound is her observation on the strong but confined attachments of a youth of genius! "I have frequently remarked, with some regret, the excessive attachment you indulge towards those who see and feel as you do yourself, and the total neglect with which you seem to treat every one else. I should reproach a man with such a fault who was destined to pass his life in a small and unvarying circle; but in an artist, who has a great object in view, and whose country is the whole world, this disposition seems to me likely to produce a great number of inconveniences. Alas! my son, the life you have hitherto led in your father's house has been in fact a pastoral life, and not such a one as was necessary for the education of a man whose destiny summons him to the world."

And when her son, after meditating on some of the most glorious productions of art, felt himself, as he says, "disheartened and cast down at the unattainable superiority of the artist, and that it was only by reflecting on the immense labour and continued efforts which such masterpieces must have required, that I regained my courage and my ardour," she observes, "This passage, my dear son, is to me as precious as gold, and I send it to you again, because I wish you to impress it strongly on your mind. The remembrance of this may also be a useful preservative from too great confidence in your abilities, to which a warm imagination may sometimes be liable, or from the despondence you might occasionally feel from the contemplation of grand originals. Continue, therefore, my dear son, to form a sound judgment and a pure taste from your own observations: your mind, while yet young and flexible, may receive whatever impressions you wish. Be careful that your abilities do not inspire in you too much confidence, lest it should happen to you as it has to many others, that they have never possessed any greater merit than that of having good abilities."

One more extract, to preserve an incident which may touch the heart of genius. This extraordinary woman, whose charac-

teristic is that of strong sense combined with delicacy of feeling, would check her German sentimentality at the moment she was betraying those emotions in which the imagination is so powerfully mixed up with the associated feelings. Arriving at their cottage at Sihlwald, she proceeds—"On entering the parlour three small pictures, painted by you, met my eyes. I passed some time in contemplating them. It is now a year, thought I, since I saw him trace these pleasing forms; he whistled and sang, and I saw them grow under his pencil; now he is far, far from us.—In short, I had the weakness to press my lips on one of these pictures. You well know, my dear son, that I am not much addicted to scenes of a sentimental turn; but to-day, while I considered your works, I could not restrain this little impulse of maternal feelings. Do not, however, be apprehensive that the tender affection of a mother will ever lead me too far, or that I shall suffer my mind to be too powerfully impressed with the painful sensations to which your absence gives birth. My reason convinces me that it is for your welfare that you are now in a place where your abilities will have opportunities of unfolding, and where you can become great in your art."

Such was the incomparable wife and mother of the GESSNERS! Will it now be a question whether matrimony be incompatible with the cultivation of the arts? A wife who reanimates the drooping genius of her husband, and a mother who is inspired by the ambition of beholding her sons eminent, is she not the real being which the ancients personified in their Muse?

CHAPTER XIX.

Literary friendships.—In early life.—Different from those of men of the world.—They suffer an unrestrained communication of their ideas, and bear reprimands and exhortations.—Unity of feelings.—A sympathy not of manners but of feelings.—Admit of dissimilar characters.—Their peculiar glory.—Their sorrow.

AMONG the virtues which literature inspires, is often that of the most romantic friendship. The delirium of love, and even its lighter caprices, are incompatible with the pursuits of the student; but to feel friendship like a passion is necessary to the mind of genius alternately elated and depressed, ever prodigal of feeling and excursive in knowledge.

The qualities which constitute literary friendship, compared with those of men of the world, must render it a sentiment as rare as love itself, which it resembles in that intellectual tenderness in which both so deeply participate.

Born "in the dews of their youth," this friendship will not

expire on their tomb. In the school or the college this immortality begins; and engaged in similar studies, should even one excel the other, he will find in him the protector of his fame; as ADDISON did in STEELE, WEST in GRAY, and GRAY in MASON. Thus PETRARCH was the guide of Boccaccio, thus BOCCACCIO became the defender of his master's genius. Perhaps friendship is never more intense than in an intercourse of minds of ready counsels and inspiring ardours. United in the same pursuits, but directed by an unequal experience, the imperceptible superiority interests, without mortifying. It is a counsel, it is an aid; in whatever form it shows itself, it has nothing of the malice of rivalry.

A beautiful picture of such a friendship among men of genius offers itself in the history of MIGNARD, the great French painter, and DU FRESNOY, the great critic of the art itself. DU FRESNOY, abandoned in utter scorn by his stern father, an apothecary, for his entire devotion to his seductive art, lived at Rome in voluntary poverty, till MIGNARD, his old fellow-student, arrived, when they became known by the name of "the inseparables." The talents of the friends were different, but their studies were the same. Their days melted away together in drawing from the ancient statues and the basso-relievos, in studying in the galleries of paintings, or among the villas which embellish the environs of Rome. One roof sheltered them, and one table supplied their sober meal. Light were the slumbers which closed each day, each the pleasing image of the former. But this remarkable friendship was not a simple sentiment which limited the views of "the Inseparables," for with them it was a perpetual source of mutual usefulness. They gave accounts to each other of whatever they observed, and carefully noted their own defects. DU FRESNOY, so critical in the theory of the art, was unsuccessful in the practical parts. His delight in poetical composition had retarded the progress of his pictorial powers. Not having been taught the handling of his pencil, he worked with difficulty; but MIGNARD succeeded in giving him a freer command and a more skilful touch; while DU FRESNOY, who was the more literary man, enriched the invention of MIGNARD by reading to him an Ode of Anacreon or Horace, a passage from the Iliad or Odyssey, or the Æneid, or the Jerusalem Delivered, which offered subjects for the artist's invention, who would throw out five or six different sketches on the same subject; a habit which so highly improved the inventive powers of MIGNARD, that he could compose a fine picture with playful facility. Thus they lived together, mutually enlightening each other. MIGNARD supplied DU FRESNOY with all that fortune had refused him; and, when he was no more, perpetuated his fame, which he felt was a portion

of his own celebrity, by publishing his posthumous poem, *De Arte Graphica*[1]; a poem, which Mason has made readable by his versification, and Reynolds even interesting by his invaluable commentary.

In the poem COWLEY composed on the death of his friend HARVEY, this stanza opens a pleasing scene of two young literary friends engaged in their midnight studies.

> "Say, for you saw us, ye immortal lights!
> How oft unwearied have we spent the nights,
> Till the Ledæan stars, so famed for love,
> Wonder'd at us from above.
> We spent them not in toys, in lust, or wine;
> But search of deep philosophy,
> Wit, eloquence, and poetry;
> Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were thine."

Touched by a personal knowledge of this union of genius and affection, even MALONE commemorates, with unusual warmth, the literary friendships of Sir Joshua Reynolds; and with a felicity of fancy not often indulged, has raised an unforced parallel between the bland wisdom of Sir Joshua and the "mitis sapientia Lælî." "What the illustrious Scipio was to Lælius, was the all-knowing and all-accomplished BURKE to REYNOLDS;" and what the elegant Lælius was to his master Panætius, whom he gratefully protected, and to his companion the poet Lucilius, whom he patronised, was REYNOLDS to JOHNSON, of whom he was the scholar and friend, and to GOLDSMITH, whom he loved and aided.

Count AZARA mourns with equal tenderness and force over the memory of the artist and the writer MENGS. "The most tender friendships would call forth tears in this sad duty of scattering flowers on his tomb; but the shade of my extinct friend warns me not to be satisfied with dropping flowers and tears—they are useless; and I would rather accomplish his wishes, in making known the author and his works."

I am infinitely delighted by a circumstance communicated to me by one who had visited GLEIM, the German poet, who seems to have been a creature made up altogether of sensibility. His many and illustrious friends he had never forgotten, and to the last hour of a life prolonged beyond his eightieth year, he possessed those interior feelings which can make even an old man an enthusiast. There seemed for GLEIM to be no extinction in friendship when the friend was no more; and he had invented a singular mode of gratifying his feelings of literary friendships. The visitor found the old man in a room of which the wainscot

[1] La Vie de Pierre Mignard, par l'abbé de Monville, the work of an amateur.

was panelled, as we still see among us in ancient houses. In every panel GLEIM had inserted the portrait of a friend, and the apartment was crowded. "You see," said the grey-haired poet, "that I never have lost a friend, and am sitting always among them."

Such friendships can never be the lot of men of the world; for the source of these lies in the interior affections and the intellectual feelings. FONTENELLE describes with characteristic delicacy the conversations of such literary friends: "Our days passed like moments; thanks to those pleasures, which, however, are not included in those which are commonly called pleasures." The friendships of the men of society move on the principle of personal interest, but interest can easily separate the interested; or they are cherished to relieve themselves from the listlessness of existence, but as weariness is contagious, the contact of the propagator is watched. Men of the world may look on each other with the same countenances, but not with the same hearts. In the common mart of life intimacies may be found which terminate in complaint and contempt; the more they know one another, the less is their mutual esteem: the feeble mind quarrels with one still more imbecile than itself; the dissolute riot with the dissolute, and they despise their companions, while they too have themselves become despicable.

Literary friendships are marked by another peculiarity; the true philosophical spirit has learned to bear that shock of contrary opinions which minds less meditative are unequal to encounter. Men of genius live in the unrestrained communication of their ideas, and confide even their caprices with a freedom which sometimes startles ordinary observers. We see literary men the most opposite in dispositions and opinions, deriving from each other that fulness of knowledge which unfolds the certain, the probable, the doubtful. Topics which break the world into factions and sects; and truths which ordinary men are doomed only to hear from a malignant adversary, they gather from a friend! If neither yields up his opinions to the other, they are at least certain of silence and a hearing; but usually

"The wise, new wisdom from the wise acquire."

This generous freedom, which spares neither reprimands nor exhortation, has often occurred in the intercourse of literary men. HUME and ROBERTSON were engaged in the same studies, but with very opposite principles; yet Robertson declined writing the English history, which he aspired to do, lest it should injure the plans of Hume; a noble sacrifice!

Politics once divided Boccaccio and Petrarch. The poet of Valchiusa had never forgiven the Florentines for their persecu-

tion of his father. By the mediation of BOCCACCIO they now offered to reinstate PETRARCH in his patrimony and his honours. Won over by the tender solicitude of his friend, PETRARCH had consented to return to his country; but with his usual inconstancy of temper, he had again excused himself to the senate of Florence, and again retreated to his solitude. Nor was this all; for the Visconti of Milan had by their flattery and promises seduced PETRARCH to their court; a court, the avowed enemy of Florence. BOCCACCIO, for the honour of literature, of his friend, of his country, indignantly heard of PETRARCH'S fatal decision, and addressed him by a letter, the most interesting perhaps which ever passed between two literary friends, who were torn asunder by the momentary passions of the vulgar, but who were still united by that immortal friendship which literature inspires, and by a reverence for that posterity which they knew would concern itself with their affairs.

It was on a journey to Ravenna that BOCCACCIO first heard the news of PETRARCH'S abandonment of his country, when he thus vehemently addressed his brother-genius.

"I would be silent, but I cannot: my reverence commands silence, but my indignation speaks. How has it happened that Silvanus (under this name he conceals Petrarch) has forgotten his dignity, the many conversations we had together on the state of Italy, his hatred of the archbishop (Visconti), his love of solitude and freedom, so necessary for study, and has resolved to imprison the Muses at that court? Whom may we trust again, if Silvanus, who once branded *Il Visconti* as the Cruel, a Polyphemus, a Cyclop, has avowed himself his friend, and placed his neck under the yoke of him whose audacity, and pride, and tyranny, he so deeply abhorred? How has Visconti obtained that which King Robert, which the pontiff, the emperor, the King of France could not? Am I to conclude that you accepted this favour from a disdain of your fellow-citizens, who once indeed scorned you, but who have reinstated you in the paternal patrimony of which you had been deprived? I do not disapprove of a just indignation; but I take Heaven to witness, that I believe that no man, whoever he may be, rightly and honestly can labour against his country, whatever be the injury he has received. You will gain nothing by opposing me in this opinion; for if stirred up by the most just indignation, you become the friend of the enemy of your country, unquestionably you will not spur him on to war, nor assist him by your arm, nor by your counsel; yet how can you avoid rejoicing with him, when you hear of the ruins, the conflagrations, the imprisonments, death, and rapine, which he shall spread among us?"

Such was the bold appeal to elevated feelings, and such the

keen reproach inspired by that confidential freedom which can only exist in the intercourse of great minds. The literary friendship, or rather adoration of BOCCACCIO for PETRARCH, was not bartered at the cost of his patriotism: and it is worthy of our notice that PETRARCH, whose personal injuries from an ungenerous republic were rankling in his mind, and whom even the eloquence of Boccaccio could not disunite from his protector Visconti, yet received the ardent reproaches of his friend without anger, though not without maintaining the freedom of his own opinions. PETRARCH replied, that the anxiety of BOCCACCIO for the liberty of his friend was a thought most grateful to him; but he assured Boccaccio that he preserved his freedom, even although it appeared that he bowed under a hard yoke. He hoped that he had not to learn to serve in his old age, he, who had hitherto studied to preserve his independence; but in respect to servitude, he did not know whom it was most displeasing to serve, a tyrant like Visconti, or with Boccaccio, a people of tyrants [1].

The unity of feeling is displayed in such memorable associates as BEAUMONT and FLETCHER; whose labours are so combined, that no critic can detect the mingled production of either; and whose lives are so closely united, that no biographer can compose the memoirs of the one without running into the history of the other. Their days were interwoven as their verses. MONTAIGNE and CHARRON, in the eyes of posterity, are rivals, but such literary friendship knows no rivalry. Such was Montaigne's affection for Charron, that he requested him by his will to bear the arms of the Montaignes; and Charron evinced his gratitude to the manes of his departed friend, by leaving his fortune to the sister of Montaigne.

How pathetically ERASMUS mourns over the death of his beloved Sir THOMAS MORE!—"*In Moro mihi videor extinctus,*" "I seem to see myself extinct in More." It was a melancholy presage of his own death, which shortly after followed. The Doric sweetness and simplicity of old ISAAC WALTON, the angler, were reflected in a mind as clear and generous, when CHARLES COTTON continued the feelings, rather than the little work of Walton. METASTASIO and FARINELLI called each other *il Gemello,* the Twin: and both delighted to trace the resemblance of their lives and fates, and the perpetual alliance of the verse and the voice. The famous JOHN BAPTISTA PORTA had a love of the mysterious parts of sciences, such as physiognomy, natural magic, the cryptical arts of writing, and projected many

[1] These interesting letters are preserved in Count Baldelli's Life of Boccaccio, p. 115.

curious inventions which astonished his age, and which we have carried to perfection. This extraordinary man saw his fame somewhat diminished by a rumour that his brother John Vincent had a great share in the composition of his works; but this never disturbed him, and Peiresc, in an interesting account of a visit to this celebrated Neapolitan, observed, that though now aged and grey-haired, he treated his younger brother as a son. These single-hearted brothers, who would not marry that they might never be separated, knew of but one fame, and that was the fame of Porta.

GOGUET, the author of "The Origin of the Arts and Sciences," bequeathed his MSS. and his books to his friend Fugere, with whom he had long united his affections and his studies, that his surviving friend might proceed with them: but the author had died of a slow and painful disorder, which Fugere had watched by his side, in silent despair. The sight of those MSS. and books was the friend's death-stroke; half his soul, which had once given them animation, was parted from him, and a few weeks terminated his own days. When LLOYD heard of the death of CHURCHILL, he neither wished to survive him, nor did. The Abbé de St. Pierre gave an interesting proof of literary friendship for Varignon, the geometrician. They were of congenial dispositions, and St. Pierre, when he went to Paris, could not endure to part with Varignon, who was too poor to accompany him; and St. Pierre was not rich. A certain income, however moderate, was necessary for the tranquil pursuits of geometry. St. Pierre presented Varignon with a portion of his small income, accompanied by that delicacy of feeling which men of genius who know each other can best conceive: "I do not give it you," said St. Pierre, "as a salary but as an annuity, that you may be independent, and quit me when you dislike me." The same circumstance occurred between AKENSIDE and DYSON. Dyson, when the poet was in great danger of adding one more illustrious name to the "Calamities of Authors," interposed between him and ill-fortune, by allowing him an annuity of three hundred a-year; and, when he found the fame of his literary friend attacked, although not in the habit of composition, he published a defence of his poetical and philosophical character. The name and character of Dyson have been suffered to die away, without a single tribute of even biographical sympathy; as that of LONGUEVILLE, the modest patron of BUTLER, in whom that great political satirist found what the careless ingratitude of a court had denied: but in the record of literary glory, the patron's name should be inscribed by the side of the literary character; for the public incurs an obligation whenever a man of genius is protected.

The statesman Fouquet, deserted by all other, witnessed La Fontaine hastening every literary man to the prison-gate. Many have inscribed their works to their disgraced patron, as Pope did so nobly to the Earl of Oxford in the Tower;

> "When interest calls off all her sneaking train,
> And all the obliged desert, and all the vain,
> They wait, or to the scaffold, or the cell,
> When the last lingering friend has bid farewell."

Literary friendship is a sympathy not of manners, but of feelings. The personal character may happen to be very opposite: the vivacious may be loved by the melancholic, and the wit by the man of learning. He who is vehement and vigorous, will feel himself a double man by the side of the friend who is calm and subtle. When we observe such friendships, we are apt to imagine that they are not real because the characters are dissimilar; but it is their common tastes and pursuits which form a bond of union. Pomponius Lætus, so called from his natural good-humour, was the close friend of Hermolaus Barbarus, whose saturnine and melancholy dispositions he often exhilarated; the warm, impetuous Luther was the beloved friend of the mild and amiable Melancthon; the caustic Boileau was the companion of Racine and Moliere; and France, perhaps, owes the *chefs-d'œuvre* of her tragic and her comic poet to her satirist. The delicate taste and the refining ingenuity of Hurd, only attached him the more to the impetuous and dogmatic Warburton. No men could be more opposite in personal character than the careless, gay, and hasty Steele, and the cautious, serious, and elegant Addison; yet no literary friendship was more fortunate than their union.

One glory is reserved for literary friendship. The friendship of a great name, indicates the greatness of the character who appeals to it. When Sydenham mentioned, as a proof of the excellence of his method of treating acute diseases, that it had received the approbation of his illustrious friend Locke, the philosopher's opinion contributed to the physician's success.

Such have been the friendships of great literary characters; but too true it is, that they have not always contributed thus largely to their mutual happiness. The querulous lament of Gleim to Klopstock is too generally participated. As Gleim lay on his death-bed, he addressed the great bard of Germany—"I am dying, dear Klopstock; and as a dying man will I say, in this world we have not lived long enough together and for each other; but in vain would we now recal the past!" What tenderness in the reproach! What self-accusation in its modesty!

CHAPTER XX.

The literary and the personal character.—The personal dispositions of an author may be the reverse of those which appear in his writings.—Erroneous conceptions of the character of distant authors.—Paradoxical appearances in the history of Genius.—Why the character of the man may be opposite to that of his writings.

ARE the personal dispositions of an author discoverable in his writings as those of an artist are imagined to appear in his works, where Michael Angelo is always great, and Raphael ever graceful?

Is the moralist a moral man? Is he malignant who publishes caustic satires? Is he a libertine who composes loose poems! And is he whose imagination delights in terror and in blood, the very monster he paints?

Many licentious writers have led chaste lives. LA MOTHE LE VAYER wrote two works of a free nature; yet his was the unblemished life of a retired sage. BAYLE is the too faithful compiler of impurities, but he resisted the voluptuousness of the senses as much as Newton. LA FONTAINE wrote tales fertile in intrigues, yet the "bonhomme" has not left on record a single ingenious amour of his own. The Queen of NAVARRE'S Tales are gross imitations of Boccaccio's; but she herself was a princess of irreproachable habits, and had given proof of the most rigid virtue; but stories of intrigues, told in a natural style, formed the fashionable literature of the day, and the genius of the female writer was amused in becoming an historian without being an actor. FORTIGUERRA, the author of the Ricciardetto, abounds with loose and licentious descriptions, and yet neither his manners nor his personal character were stained by the offending freedom of his inventions. SMOLLETT'S character is immaculate; yet he has described two scenes which offend even the licence of imagination. COWLEY, who boasts with such gaiety of the versatility of his passion among so many mistresses, wanted even the confidence to address one. Thus, licentious writers may be very chaste persons. The imagination may be a volcano, while the heart is an Alp of ice.

Turn to the moralist—there we find Seneca, a usurer of seven millions, writing on moderate desires on a table of gold. SALLUST, who so eloquently declaims against the licentiousness of the age, was repeatedly accused in the senate of public and habitual debaucheries; and when this inveigher against the spoilers of provinces attained to a remote government, he pil-

laged like Verres. That "DEMOSTHENES was more capable of recommending than of imitating the virtues of our ancestors," is the observation of Plutarch. LUCIAN, when young, declaimed against the friendship of the great, as another name for servitude; but when his talents procured him a situation under the emperor, he facetiously compared himself to those quacks, who themselves plagued by a perpetual cough, offer to sell an infallible remedy for one. Sir THOMAS MORE, in his Utopia, declares that no man ought to be punished for his religion; yet he became a fierce persecutor, flogging and racking men for his own "true faith." At the moment the poet ROUSSEAU was giving versions of the Psalms, full of unction, as our Catholic neighbours express it, he was profaning the same pen with infamous epigrams; and an erotic poet of our times has composed night-hymns in churchyards with the same ardour with which he poured forth Anacreontics. Napoleon said of Bernardin St. Pierre, whose writings breathe the warm principles of humanity and social happiness in every page, that he was one of the worst private characters in France. I have heard this from other quarters; it startles one! The pathetic genius of STERNE played about his head, but never reached his heart. Cardinal RICHELIEU wrote "The Perfection of a Christian, or the Life of a Christian;" yet was he an utter stranger to Gospel maxims; and FREDERICK THE GREAT, when young, published his Anti-Machiavel, and deceived the world by the promise of a pacific reign. This military genius protested against those political arts which he afterwards adroitly practised, uniting the lion's head with the fox's tail—and thus himself realising the political monster of Machiavel!

And thus also is it with the personal dispositions of an author, which may be quite the reverse from those which appear in his writings. Johnson would not believe that HORACE was a happy man because his verses were cheerful, any more than he could think POPE so, because the poet is continually informing us of it. It surprised Spence when Pope told him that ROWE the tragic poet, whom he had considered so solemn a personage, "would laugh all day long, and do nothing else but laugh." Lord Kaimes says, that ARBUTHNOT must have been a great genius, for he exceeded Swift and Addison in humorous painting; although we are informed he had nothing of that peculiarity in his character. YOUNG, who is constantly contemning preferment in his writings, was all his life pining after it; and the conversation of the sombrous author of the "Night Thoughts" was of the most volatile kind, abounding with trivial puns. He was one of the first who subscribed to the assembly at Wellwyn. Mrs. Carter, who greatly admired his sublime poetry, express-

ing her surprise at his social converse, he replied,—"Madam, there is much difference between writing and talking."

MOLIERE, on the contrary, whose humour is so perfectly comic, and even ludicrous, was thoughtful and serious, and even melancholy. His strongly-featured physiognomy exhibits the face of a great tragic, rather than of a great comic poet. Boileau called Molière "The contemplative man." Those who make the world laugh, often themselves laugh the least. A famous and witty harlequin of France was overcome with hypochondriasm, and consulted a physician, who, after inquiring about his malady, told his miserable patient, that he knew of no other medicine for him than to take frequent doses of Carlin—"I am Carlin himself," exclaimed the melancholy man in despair. BURTON, the pleasant and vivacious author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy," of whom it is noticed, that he could in an interval of vapours raise laughter in any company, in his chamber was "mute and mopish," and was at last so overcome by that intellectual disorder, which he appeared to have got rid of by writing his volume, that it is believed he closed his life in a fit of melancholy.

Could one have imagined that the brilliant wit, the luxuriant raillery, and the fine and deep sense of PASCAL, could have combined with the most opposite qualities—the hypochondriasm and bigotry of an ascetic? ROCHEFOUCAULD, in private life, was a conspicuous example of all those moral qualities of which he seemed to deny the existence, and exhibited in this respect a striking contrast to the Cardinal de Retz, who has presumed to censure him for his want of faith in the reality of virtue; but DE RETZ himself was the unbeliever in disinterested virtue. This great genius was one of those pretended patriots destitute of a single one of the virtues for which he was the clamorous advocate of faction.

When Valincour attributed the excessive tenderness in the tragedies of RACINE to the poet's own impassioned character, the son amply showed that his father was by no means this slave of love. RACINE never wrote a single love poem, nor even had a mistress; and his wife had never read his tragedies, for poetry was not her delight. Racine's motive for making love the constant source of action in his tragedies, was, from the principle which has influenced so many poets, who usually conform to the prevalent taste of the times. In the court of a young monarch, it was necessary that heroes should be lovers; Corneille had nobly run in one career, and Racine could not have existed as a great poet, had he not rivalled him in an opposite one. The tender RACINE was no lover; but he was a subtle and epigrammatic observer, before whom his convivial

friends never cared to open their minds; and the caustic BOILEAU truly said of him, "RACINE is far more malicious than I am."

ALFIERI speaks of his mistress, as if he lived with her in the most unreserved familiarity; the reverse was the case. And the gratitude and affection with which he describes his mother, and which she deserved, entered so little into his habitual feelings, that after their early separation, he never saw her but once, though he often passed through the country where she resided.

JOHNSON has composed a beautiful Rambler, describing the pleasures which result from the influence of good-humour; and somewhat remarkably says, "Without good-humour, learning and bravery can be only formidable, and confer that superiority which swells the heart of the lion in the desert, where he roars without reply, and ravages without resistance." He who could so finely discover the happy influence of this pleasing quality, was himself a stranger to it, and "the roar and the ravage" were familiar to our lion. Men of genius frequently substitute their beautiful imagination for spontaneous and natural sentiment. It is not therefore surprising, if we are often erroneous in the conception we form of the personal character of a distant author. KLOPSTOCK, the votary of the muse of Zion, so astonished and warmed the sage BODMER, that he invited the inspired bard to his house; but his visitor shocked the grave professor, when, instead of a poet rapt in silent meditation, a volatile youth leaped out of the chaise, who was an enthusiast for retirement only when writing verses. An artist, whose pictures exhibit a series of scenes of domestic tenderness, awakening all the charities of private life, I have heard participated in them in no other way than on his canvas. EVELYN, who has written in favour of active life, "loved and lived in retirement [1];" while Sir GEORGE MACKENZIE, who had been continually in the bustle of business, framed a eulogium on solitude. We see in MACHIAVEL'S code of tyranny, of depravity, and of criminal violence, a horrid picture of human nature; but this retired philosopher was a friend to the freedom of his country, he participated in none of the crimes he had recorded, but drew up these systematised crimes "as an observer, not as a criminal."

[1] Since this was written, the correspondence of EVELYN has appeared, by which we find that he apologised to Cowley for having published this very treatise, which seemed to condemn that life of study and privacy to which they were both equally attached; and confesses that the whole must be considered as a mere sportive effusion, requesting that Cowley would not suppose its principles formed his private opinions. Thus LEIBNITZ, we are told, laughed at the fanciful system revealed in his *Théodicée*, and acknowledged that he never wrote it in earnest; that a philosopher is not always obliged to write seriously, and that to invent an hypothesis is only a proof of the force of imagination.

DRUMMOND, whose sonnets still retain the beauty and the sweetness and the delicacy of the most amiable imagination, was a man of a harsh irritable temper, and has been thus characterised :—

"Testie Drummond could not speak for fretting."

Thus authors and artists may yield no certain indication of their personal characters in their works. Inconstant men will write on constancy, and licentious minds may elevate themselves into poetry and piety. We should be unjust to some of the greatest geniuses, if the extraordinary sentiments which they put into the mouths of their dramatic personages are maliciously to be applied to themselves. EURIPIDES was accused of atheism when he introduced a denier of the gods on the stage. MILTON has been censured by CLARKE for the impiety of Satan; and an enemy of SHAKESPEARE might have reproached him for his perfect delineation of the accomplished villain Iago, as it was said that Dr. MOORE was hurt in the opinions of some by his odious Zeluco. CREBILLON complains of this :—"They charge me with all the iniquities of Atreus, and they consider me in some places as a wretch with whom it is unfit to associate; as if all which the mind invents must be derived from the heart." This poet offers a striking instance of the little alliance existing between the literary and personal dispositions of an author. CREBILLON, who exulted, on his entrance into the French Academy, that he had never tinged his pen with the gall of satire, delighted to strike on the most harrowing string of the tragic lyre. In his Atreus, the father drinks the blood of his son; in his Rhadamistus, the son expires under the hand of the father; in his Electra, the son assassinates the mother. A poet is a painter of the soul, but a great artist is not therefore a bad man.

MONTAIGNE appears to have been sensible of this fact in the literary character. Of authors, he says, he likes to read their little anecdotes and private passions :—"Car j'ai une singulière curiosité de connaître l'âme et les naïfs jugemens de mes auteurs. Il faut bien juger leur suffisance, mais non pas leurs mœurs, ni eux, par cette montre de leurs écrits qu'ils étalent au théâtre du monde." Which may be thus translated : "For I have a singular curiosity to know the soul and simple opinions of my authors. We must judge of their ability, but not of their manners, nor of themselves, by that show of their writings which they display on the theatre of the world." This is very just; are we yet sure, however, that the simplicity of this old favourite of Europe might not have been as much a theatrical gesture as the sentimentality of Sterne? The great authors of the Port-Royal Logic have raised severe objections to prove that MONTAIGNE

was not quite so open in respect to those simple details which he imagined might diminish his personal importance with his readers. He pretends that he reveals all his infirmities and weaknesses, while he is perpetually passing himself off for something more than he is. He carefully informs us that he has "a page," the usual attendant of an independent gentleman, and lives in an old family château; when the fact was, that his whole revenue did not exceed six thousand livres, a state beneath mediocrity. He is also equally careful not to drop any mention of his having a *clerk with a bag*; for he was a counsellor of Bordeaux, but affected the gentleman and the soldier. He trumpets himself forth for having been *mayor* of Bordeaux, as this offered an opportunity of telling us that he succeeded *Marshal* Biron, and resigned it to *Marshal* Matignon. Could he have discovered that any *marshal* had been a *lawyer*, he would not have sunk that part of his life. Montaigne himself has said, "that in forming a judgment of a man's life, particular regard should be paid to his behaviour at the end of it;" and he more than once tells us that the chief study of his life is to die calm and silent; and that he will plunge himself headlong and stupidly into death, as into an obscure abyss, which swallows one up in an instant; that to die was the affair of a moment's suffering, and required no precepts. He talked of reposing on the "pillow of doubt." But how did this great philosopher die? He called for the more powerful opiates of the infallible church! The mass was performed in his chamber, and, in rising to embrace it, his hands dropped and failed him; thus, as Professor Dugald Stewart observes on this philosopher,—"He expired in performing what his old preceptor, Buchanan, would not have scrupled to describe as an act of idolatry."

We must not then consider that he who paints vice with energy is therefore vicious, lest we injure an honourable man; nor must we imagine that he who celebrates virtue is therefore virtuous, for we may then repose on a heart which knowing the right pursues the wrong.

These paradoxical appearances in the history of genius present a curious moral phenomenon. Much must be attributed to the plastic nature of the versatile faculty itself. Unquestionably many men of genius have often resisted the indulgence of one talent to exercise another with equal power; and some who have solely composed sermons, could have touched on the foibles of society with the spirit of Horace or Juvenal. BLACKSTONE and Sir WILLIAM JONES directed that genius to the austere studies of law and philology, which might have excelled in the poetical and historical character. So versatile is this faculty of genius, that its possessors are sometimes uncertain of

the manner in which they shall treat their subject, whether gravely or ludicrously. When BREBŒUF, the French translator of the Pharsalia of Lucan, had completed the first book as it now appears, he at the same time composed a burlesque version, and sent both to the great arbiter of taste in that day, to decide which the poet should continue. The decision proved to be difficult. Are there not writers who, with all the vehemence of genius, by adopting one principle, can make all things shrink into the pigmy forms of ridicule, or by adopting another principle startle us by the gigantic monsters of their own exaggerated imagination? On this principle of the versatility of the faculty, a production of genius is a piece of art which wrought up to its full effect, with a felicity of manner acquired by taste and habit, is merely the result of certain arbitrary combinations of the mind.

Are we then to reduce the works of a man of genius to a mere sport of his talents—a game in which he is only the best player? Can he whose secret power raises so many emotions in our breasts, be without any in his own? A mere actor performing a part? Is he unfeeling when he is pathetic, indifferent when he is indignant? Is he an alien to all the wisdom and virtue he inspires? No! were men of genius themselves to assert this, and it is said some incline so to do, there is a more certain conviction than their misconceptions, in our own consciousness, which for ever assures us, that deep feelings and elevated thoughts can alone spring from those who feel deeply and think nobly.

In proving that the character of the man may be very opposite to that of his writings, we must recollect that the habits of the life may be contrary to the habits of the mind[1]. The influence of their studies over men of genius is limited. Out of the ideal world, man is reduced to be the active creature of sensation. An author has, in truth, two distinct characters: the literary, formed by the habits of his study; the personal, by the habits of his situation. GRAY, cold, effeminate, and timid in his personal, was lofty and awful in his literary character. We see men of polished manners and bland affections, who, in grasping a pen, are thrusting a poniard; while others in domestic life with the simplicity of children and the feebleness of nervous affections, can

[1] Nothing is more delightful to me in my researches on the literary character, than when I find in persons of unquestionable and high genius the results of my own discoveries. This circumstance has frequently happened to confirm my principles. Long after this was published, Madame de Staël made this important confession in her recent work, "Dix Années d'Exil," p. 154. "Je ne pouvais me dissimuler que je n'étais pas une personne courageuse; j'ai de la hardiesse dans l'*imagination*, mais de la timidité dans le *caractère*."

shake the senate or the bar with the vehemence of their eloquence and the intrepidity of their spirit. The writings of the famous BAPTISTA PORTA are marked by the boldness of his genius, which formed a singular contrast with the pusillanimity of his conduct when menaced or attacked. The heart may be feeble though the mind is strong. To think boldly may be the habit of the mind, to act weakly may be the habit of the constitution.

However the personal character may contrast with that of their genius, still are the works themselves genuine, and exist as realities for us—and were so doubtless to the composers themselves in the act of composition. In the calm of study, a beautiful imagination may convert him, whose morals are corrupt, into an admirable moralist, awakening feelings which yet may be cold in the business of life: as we have shown that the phlegmatic can excite himself into wit, and the cheerful men delight in "Night Thoughts." SALLUST, the corrupt Sallust, might retain the most sublime conceptions of the virtues which were to save the Republic; and STERNE, whose heart was not so susceptible in ordinary occurrences, while he was gradually creating incident after incident and touching successive emotions in the stories of Le Fevre and Maria, might have thrilled—like some of his readers. Many have mourned over the wisdom or the virtue they contemplated, mortified at their own infirmity. Thus, though there may be no identity between the book and the man, still for us, an author is ever an abstract being, and, as one of the Fathers said, "A dead man may sin dead, leaving books that make others sin." An author's wisdom or his folly does not die with him. The volume, not the author, is our companion, and is for us a real personage, performing before us whatever it inspires; "He being dead, yet speaketh." Such is the vitality of a book!

CHAPTER XXI.

The man of letters.—Occupies an intermediate station between authors and readers.—His solitude described.—Often the father of genius.—Atticus, a man of letters of antiquity.—The perfect character of a modern man of letters exhibited in Peiresc.—Their utility to authors and artists.

AMONG the active members of the literary republic, there is a class whom formerly we distinguished by the title of MEN OF LETTERS, a title which, with us, has nearly gone out of currency, though I do not think that the general term of "literary men" would be sufficiently appropriate.

The man of letters, whose habits and whose whole life so closely resemble those of an author, can only be distinguished

by this simple circumstance, that the man of letters is not an author.

Yet he whose sole occupation through life is literature, he who is always acquiring and never producing, appears as ridiculous as the architect who never raised an edifice, or the statuary who refrains from sculpture. His pursuits are reproached with terminating in an epicurean selfishness, and amidst his incessant avocations he himself is considered as a particular sort of idler.

This race of literary characters, as we now find them, could not have appeared till the press had poured forth its affluence. In the degree that the nations of Europe became literary, was that philosophical curiosity kindled, which induced some to devote their fortunes and their days, and to experience some of the purest of human enjoyments, in preserving and familiarising themselves with "the monuments of vanished minds," as books are called by D'Avenant with so much sublimity. Their expansive library presents an indestructible history of the genius of every people, through all their eras—and whatever men have thought and whatever men have done, were at length discovered in books.

Men of letters occupy an intermediate station between authors and readers. They are gifted with more curiosity of knowledge and more multiplied tastes, and by those precious collections which they are forming during their lives, are more completely furnished with the means than are possessed by the multitude who read, and the few who write.

The studies of an author are usually restricted to particular subjects. His tastes are tinctured by their colouring, his mind is always shaping itself by their form. An author's works form his solitary pride, and his secret power; while half his life wears away in the slow maturity of composition, and still the ambition of authorship torments its victim alike in disappointment or in possession.

But soothing is the solitude of the MAN OF LETTERS! View the busied inhabitant of the library surrounded by the objects of his love! He possesses them—and they possess him! Those volumes—images of our mind and passions!—as he traces them from Herodotus to Gibbon, from Homer to Shakespeare—those portfolios, which gather up the inventions of genius, and that selected cabinet of medals, which holds so many unwritten histories;—some favourite sculptures and pictures, and some antiquities of all nations, here and there about his house—these are his furniture!

In his unceasing occupations the only repose he requires, consists, not in quitting but in changing them. Every day produces

its discovery; every day in the life of a man of letters may furnish a multitude of emotions and of ideas. For him there is a silence amidst the world; and in the scene, ever opening before him, all that has passed is acted over again, and all that is to come seems revealed as in a vision. Often his library is contiguous to his chamber [1], and this domain "parva sed apta," this contracted space, has often marked the boundary of the existence of the opulent owner, who lives where he will die; contracting his days into hours: and a whole life thus passed is found too short to close its designs. Such are the men who have not been unhappily described by the Hollanders as *lief-hebbers*, lovers or fanciers, and their collection as *lief-hebbery*, things of their love. The Dutch call everything for which they are impassioned *lief-hebbery*; but their feeling being much stronger than their delicacy, they apply the term to everything from poesy and picture to tulips and tobacco. The term wants the melody of the languages of genius; but something parallel is required to correct that indiscriminate notion which most persons associate with that of *collectors*.

It was fancifully said of one of these lovers, in the style of the age, that, "His book was his bride, and his study his bride-chamber." Many have voluntarily relinquished a public station and their rank in society, neglecting even their fortune and their health, for the life of self-oblivion of the man of letters. Count DE CAYLUS expended a princely income in the study and the encouragement of Art. He passed his mornings among the studios of artists, watching their progress, increasing his collections, and closing his day in the retirement of his own cabinet. His rank and his opulence were no obstructions to his settled habits. CICERO himself, in his happier moments, addressing ATTICUS, exclaimed—"I had much rather be sitting on your little bench under Aristotle's picture, than in the curule chairs of our great ones." This wish was probably sincere, and reminds us of ano-

[1] The contiguity of the CHAMBER to the LIBRARY is not the solitary fancy of an individual, but marks the class. Early in life, when in France and Holland, I met with several of these *amateurs*, who had bounded their lives by the circle of their collections, and were rarely seen out of them. The late Duke of ROXBURGH once expressed his delight to a literary friend of mine, that he had only to step from his sleeping apartment into his fine library; so that he could command, at all moments, the gratification of pursuing his researches while he indulged his reveries. The Chevalier VERHULST, of Bruxelles, of whom we have a curious portrait prefixed to the catalogue of his pictures and curiosities, was one of those men of letters who experienced this strong affection for his collections, and to such a degree, that he never went out of his house for twenty years; where, however, he kept up a courteous intercourse with the lovers of art and literature. He was an enthusiastic votary of Rubens, of whom he has written a copious life in Dutch, the only work he appears to have composed.

ther great politician who in his secession from public affairs retreated to a literary life, where he appears suddenly to have discovered a new-found world. Fox's favourite line, which he often repeated, was,

> "How various his employments whom the world
> Calls idle!"

De Sacy, one of the Port-Royalists, was fond of repeating this lively remark of a man of wit:—"that all the mischief in the world comes from not being able to keep ourselves quiet in our room."

But tranquillity is essential to the existence of the man of letters—an unbroken and devotional tranquillity. For though, unlike the author, his occupations are interrupted without inconvenience, and resumed without effort; yet if the painful realities of life break into this visionary world of literature and art, there is an atmosphere of taste about him which will be dissolved, and harmonious ideas which will be chased away, as it happens when something is violently flung among the trees where the birds are singing; all instantly disperse!

Even to quit their collections for a short time is a real suffering to these lovers; everything which surrounds them becomes endeared by habit, and by some higher associations. Men of letters have died with grief from having been forcibly deprived of the use of their libraries. De Thou, with all a brother's sympathy, in his great history, has recorded the sad fates of several who had witnessed their collections dispersed in the civil wars of France, or had otherwise been deprived of their precious volumes. Sir Robert Cotton fell ill, and betrayed, in the ashy paleness of his countenance, the misery which killed him on the sequestration of his collections. "They have broken my heart who have locked up my library from me," was his lament.

If this passion for acquisition and enjoyment be so strong and exquisite, what wonder that these "lovers" should regard all things as valueless in comparison with the objects of their love? There seem to be spells in their collections, and in their fascination they have often submitted to the ruin of their personal, but not of their internal enjoyments. They have scorned to balance in the scales the treasures of literature and art, though imperial magnificence once was ambitious to outweigh them.

Van Praun, a friend of Albert Durer's, of whom we possess a catalogue of pictures and prints, was one of these enthusiasts of taste. The Emperor of Germany, probably desirous of finding a royal road to a rare collection, sent an agent to procure the present one entire; and that some delicacy might be observed with such a man, the purchase was to be proposed in the form

of a mutual exchange; the emperor had gold, pearls, and diamonds. Our *lief-hebber* having silently listened to the imperial agent, seemed astonished that such things should be considered as equivalents for a collection of works of art, which had required a long life of experience and many previous studies and practised tastes to have formed, and compared with which gold, pearls, and diamonds, afforded but a mean, an unequal, and a barbarous barter.

If the man of letters be less dependent on others for the very perception of his own existence, than men of the world are; his solitude however is not that of a desert: for all there tends to keep alive those concentrated feelings which cannot be indulged with security, or even without ridicule in general society. Like the Lucullus of Plutarch, he would not only live among the votaries of literature, but would live for them; he throws open his library, his gallery, and his cabinet, to all the Grecians. Such men are the fathers of genius; they seem to possess an aptitude in discovering those minds which are clouded over by the obscurity of their situations; and it is they who so frequently project those benevolent institutions, where they have poured out the philanthropy of their hearts in that world which they appear to have forsaken. If Europe be literary, to whom does she owe this more than to these men of letters? Is it not to their noble passion of amassing through life those magnificent collections, which often bear the names of their founders from the gratitude of a following age? Venice, Florence, and Copenhagen, Oxford and London, attest the existence of their labours. Our BODLEYS and our HARLEYS, our COTTONS and our SLOANES, our CRACHERODES, our TOWNLEYS, and our BANKS, were of this race! In the perpetuity of their own studies they felt as if they were extending human longevity, by throwing an unbroken light of knowledge into the next age. The private acquisitions of a solitary man of letters during half a century have become public endowments. A generous enthusiasm inspired these intrepid labours, and their voluntary privations of what the world calls its pleasures and its honours, would form an interesting history not yet written; their due, yet undischarged.

But "men of the world," as they are emphatically distinguished, imagine that a man so lifeless in "the world" must be one of the dead in it, and, with mistaken wit, would inscribe over the sepulchre of his library, "Here lies the body of our friend." If the man of letters have voluntarily quitted their "world," at least he has passed into another, where he enjoys a sense of existence through a long succession of ages, and where Time, who destroys all things for others, for him

only preserves and discovers. This world is best described by one who has lingered among its inspirations. "We are wafted into other times and strange lands, connecting us by a sad but exalting relationship with the great events and great minds which have passed away. Our studies at once cherish and control the imagination, by leading it over an unbounded range of the noblest scenes in the overawing company of departed wisdom and genius [1]."

Living more with books than with men, which is often becoming better acquainted with man himself, though not always with men, the man of letters is more tolerant of opinions than opinionists are among themselves. Nor are his views of human affairs contracted to the day, like those who in the heat and hurry of a too active life, prefer expedients to principles; men who deem themselves politicians because they are not moralists; to whom the centuries behind have conveyed no results, and who cannot see how the present time is always full of the future. "Everything," says the lively Burnet, "must be brought to the nature of tinder or gunpowder, ready for a spark to set it on fire," before they discover it. The man of letters indeed is accused of a cold indifference to the interests which divide society; he is rarely observed as the head or the "rump of a party;" he views at a distance their temporary passions—those mighty beginnings, of which he knows the miserable terminations.

Antiquity presents the character of a perfect man of letters in ATTICUS, who retreated from a political to a literary life. Had his letters accompanied those of Cicero, they would have illustrated the ideal character of his class. But the sage ATTICUS rejected a popular celebrity for a passion not less powerful, yielding up his whole soul to study. CICERO, with all his devotion to literature, was at the same time agitated by another kind of glory, and the most perfect author in Rome imagined that he was enlarging his honours by the intrigues of the consulship. He has distinctly marked the character of the man of letters in the person of his friend ATTICUS, for which he has expressed his respect, although he could not content himself with its imitation. "I know," says this man of genius and ambition, "I know the greatness and ingenuousness of your soul, nor have I found any difference between us, but in a different choice of life; a certain sort of ambition has led me earnestly to seek after honours, while other motives, by no means blamable, induced you to adopt an honourable leisure; *honestum otium* [2]." These motives appear in the interesting memoirs of

[1] Quarterly Review, No. xxxiii. p. 145.

[2] Ad Atticum, Lib. i. Ep. 17.

this man of letters; a contempt of political intrigues combined with a desire to escape from the splendid bustle of Rome to the learned leisure of Athens. He wished to dismiss a pompous train of slaves for the delight of assembling under his roof a literary society of readers and transcribers. And having collected under that roof the portraits or busts of the illustrious men of his country, inspired by their spirit and influenced by their virtues or their genius, he inscribed under them, in concise verses, the characters of their mind. Valuing wealth only for its use, a dignified economy enabled him to be profuse, and a moderate expenditure allowed him to be generous.

The result of this literary life was the strong affections of the Athenians. At the first opportunity the absence of the man of letters offered, they raised a statue to, him, conferring on our POMPONIUS the fond surname of ATTICUS. To have received a name from the voice of the city they inhabited has happened to more than one man of letters. PINELLI, born a Neapolitan, but residing at Venice, among other peculiar honours received from the senate, was there distinguished by the affectionate title of "the Venetian."

Yet such a character as ATTICUS could not escape censure from "men of the world." They want the heart and the imagination to conceive something better than themselves. The happy indifference, perhaps the contempt, of our ATTICUS for rival factions, they have stigmatised as a cold neutrality, a timid pusillanimous hypocrisy. Yet ATTICUS could not have been a mutual friend, had not both parties alike held the man of letters as a sacred being amidst their disguised ambition; and the urbanity of ATTICUS, while it balanced the fierceness to two heroes, Pompey and Cæsar, could even temper the rivalry of genius in the orators Hortensius and Cicero. A great man of our own country widely differed from the accusers of Atticus. Sir MATTHEW HALE lived in distracted times, and took the character of our man of letters for his model, adopting two principles in the conduct of the Roman. He engaged himself with no party business, and afforded a constant relief to the unfortunate, of whatever party. He was thus preserved amidst the contests of the times.

If the personal interests of the man of letters be not deeply involved in society, his individual prosperity, however, is never contrary to public happiness. Other professions necessarily exist by the conflict and the calamities of the community: the politician becomes great by hatching an intrigue; the lawyer, in counting his briefs; the physician, his sick-list. The soldier is clamorous for war; the merchant riots on high prices. But the man of letters only calls for peace and books, to unite himself with his brothers scattered over Europe; and his usefulness can

only be felt at those intervals, when, after a long interchange of destruction, men, recovering their senses, discover that "knowledge is power." BURKE, whose ample mind took in every conception of the literary character, has finely touched on the distinction between this order of contemplative men, and the other active classes of society. In addressing Mr. MALONE, whose real character was that of a man of letters who first showed us the neglected state of our literary history, BURKE observed—for I shall give his own words, always too beautiful to alter—"If you are not called to exert your great talents, and employ your great acquisitions in the transitory service of your country, which is done in active life, you will continue to do it that permanent service which it receives from the labours of those who know how to make the silence of closets more beneficial to the world than all the noise and bustle of courts, senates, and camps."

A moving picture of the literary life of a man of letters, who was no author, would have been lost to us, had not PEIRESC found in GASSENDI a twin spirit. So intimate was that biographer with the very thoughts, so closely united in the same pursuits, and so perpetual an observer of the remarkable man whom he has immortalised, that when employed on this elaborate resemblance of his friend, he was only painting himself with all the identifying strokes of self-love [1].

It was in the vast library of PINELLI, the founder of the most magnificent one in Europe that PEIRESC, then a youth, felt the remote hope of emulating the man of letters before his eyes. His life was not without preparation, nor without fortunate coincidences; but there was a grandeur of design in the execution which originated in the genius of the man himself.

The curious genius of PEIRESC was marked by its precocity, as usually are strong passions in strong minds; this intense curiosity was the germ of all those studies which seemed mature in his youth. He early resolved on a personal intercourse with the great literary characters of Europe; and his friend has thrown over these literary travels that charm of detail by which we accompany PEIRESC into the libraries of the learned; there with the historian opening new sources of history, or with the critic correcting manuscripts, and settling points of erudition; or by the opened cabinet of the antiquary, deciphering obscure inscriptions, and explaining medals. In the galleries of the curious in art, among their marbles, their pictures, and their prints, PEI-

[1] "I suppose," writes EVELYN, that most agreeable enthusiast of literature, to a travelling friend, "that you carry the life of that incomparable virtuoso always about you in your motions, not only because it is portable, but for that it is written by the pen of the great Gassendus.

RESC has often revealed to the artist some secret in his own art. In the museum of the naturalist, or the garden of the botanist, there was no rarity of nature on which he had not something to communicate. His mind toiled with that impatience of knowledge, that becomes a pain only when the mind is not on the advance. In England PEIRESC was the associate of Camden and Selden, and had more than one interview with that friend to literary men, our calumniated James the First. One may judge by these who were the men whom PEIRESC sought, and by whom he himself was ever after sought. Such, indeed, were immortal friendships! Immortal they may be justly called, from the objects in which they concerned themselves, and from the permanent results of the combined studies of such friends.

Another peculiar greatness in this literary character was PEIRESC's enlarged devotion to literature out of its purest love for itself alone. He made his own universal curiosity the source of knowledge to other men. Considering the studious as forming but one great family wherever they were, for PEIRESC the national repositories of knowledge in Europe formed but one collection for the world. This man of letters had possessed himself of their contents, that he might have manuscripts collated, unedited pieces explored, extracts supplied, and even draughtsmen employed in remote parts of the world, to furnish views and plans, and to copy antiquities for the student, who in some distant retirement often discovered that the literary treasures of the world were unfailingly opened to him by the secret devotion of this man of letters.

Carrying on the same grandeur in his views, his universal mind busied itself in every part of the habitable globe. He kept up a noble traffic with all travellers, supplying them with philosophical instruments and recent inventions, by which he facilitated their discoveries, and secured their reception even in barbarous realms. In return he claimed, at his own cost, for he was "born rather to give than to receive," says Gassendi, fresh importations of Oriental literature, curious antiquities, or botanic rarities; and it was the curiosity of PEIRESC which first embellished his own garden, and thence the gardens of Europe, with a rich variety of exotic flowers and fruits. Whenever presented with a medal, a vase, or a manuscript, he never slept over the gift till he had discovered what the donor delighted in; and a book, a picture, or a plant, when money could not be offered, fed their mutual passion, and sustained the general cause of science. The correspondence of PEIRESC branched out to the farthest bounds of Ethiopia, connected both Americas, and had touched the newly-discovered extremities of the universe, when this intrepid mind closed in a premature death.

I have drawn this imperfect view of PEIRESC's character, that men of letters may be reminded of the capacities they possess. In the character of PEIRESC, however, there still remains another peculiar feature. His fortune was not great; and when he sometimes endured the reproach of those whose sordidness was startled at his prodigality of mind, and the great objects which were the result, PEIRESC replied, that "a small matter suffices for the natural wants of a literary man, whose true wealth consists in the monuments of arts, the treasures of his library, and the brotherly affections of the ingenious." PEIRESC was a French judge, but he supported his rank more by his own character than by luxury or parade. He would not wear silk, and no tapestry hangings ornamented his apartments; but the walls were covered with the portraits of his literary friends; and in the unadorned simplicity of his study, his books, his papers, and his letters, were scattered about him on the tables, the seats, and the floor. There, stealing from the world, he would sometimes admit to his spare supper his friend Gassendi, "content," says that amiable philosopher, "to have me for his guest."

PEIRESC, like PINELLI, never published any work. These men of letters derived their pleasure, and perhaps their pride, from those vast strata of knowledge which their curiosity had heaped together in their mighty collections. They either were not endowed with that faculty of genius which strikes out aggregate views, or were destitute of the talent of composition which embellishes minute ones. This deficiency in the minds of such men may be attributed to a thirst of learning, which the very means to allay can only inflame. From all sides they are gathering information; and that knowledge seems never perfect to which every day brings new acquisitions. With these men, to compose is to hesitate; and to revise is to be mortified by fresh doubts and unsupplied omissions. PEIRESC was employed all his life on a history of Provence; but, observes Gassendi, "He could not mature the birth of his literary offspring, or lick it into any shape of elegant form; he was, therefore, content to take the midwife's part, by helping the happier labours of others."

Such are the cultivators of knowledge, who are rarely authors, but who are often, however, contributing to the works of others; and without whose secret labours the public would not have possessed many valued ones. The delightful instruction which these men are constantly offering to authors and to artists, flows from their silent but uninterrupted cultivation of literature and the arts.

When Robertson, after his successful History of Scotland, was long irresolute in his designs, and still unpractised in that curious research which habitually occupies these men of letters,

his admirers had nearly lost his popular productions, had not a fortunate introduction to Dr. BIRCH enabled him to open the clasped books, and to drink of the sealed fountains. ROBERTSON has confessed his inadequate knowledge, and his overflowing gratitude, in letters which I have elsewhere printed. A suggestion by a man of letters has opened the career of many an aspirant. A hint from WALSH conveyed a new conception of English poetry to one of its masters. The celebrated treatise of GROTIUS on "Peace and War" was projected by PEIRESC. It was said of MAGLIABECHI, who knew all books, and never wrote one, that by his diffusive communications he was in some respect concerned in all the great works of his times. Sir ROBERT COTTON greatly assisted CAMDEN and SPEED; and that hermit of literature, BAKER of Cambridge, was ever supplying with his invaluable researches Burnet, Kennet, Hearne, and Middleton. The concealed aid which men of letters afford authors, may be compared to those subterraneous streams, which, flowing into spacious lakes, are, though unobserved, enlarging the waters which attract the public eye.

Count DE CAYLUS, celebrated for his collections, and for his generous patronage of artists, has given the last touches to this picture of the man of letters, with all the delicacy and warmth of a self-painter.

"His glory is confined to the mere power which he has of being one day useful to letters and to the arts; for his whole life is employed in collecting materials of which learned men and artists make no use till after the death of him who amassed them. It affords him a very sensible pleasure to labour in hopes of being useful to those who pursue the same course of studies, while there are so great a number who die without discharging the debt which they incur to society."

Such a man of letters appears to have been the late Lord WOODHOUSELEE. Mr. Mackenzie, returning from his lordship's literary retirement, meeting Mr. Alison, finely said, that "he hoped he was going to Woodhouselee; for no man could go there without being happier, or return from it without being better."

Shall we then hesitate to assert, that this class of literary men forms a useful, as well as a select order in society? We see that their leisure is not idleness, that their studies are not unfruitful for the public, and that their opinions, purified from passions and prejudices, are always the soundest in the nation. They are counsellors whom statesmen may consult; fathers of genius to whom authors and artists may look for aid, and friends of all nations; for we ourselves have witnessed, during a war of thirty years, that the MEN OF LETTERS in England were still united

with their brothers in France. The abode of Sir JOSEPH BANKS was ever open to every literary and scientific foreigner; while a wish expressed or a communication written by this MAN OF LETTERS, was even respected by a political power which, acknowledging no other rights, paid a voluntary tribute to the claims of science and the privileges of literature.

CHAPTER XXII.

Literary old age still learning.—Influence of late studies in life.—Occupations in advanced age of the literary character.—Of literary men who have died at their studies.

THE old age of the literary character retains its enjoyments, and usually its powers—a happiness which accompanies no other. The old age of coquetry witnesses its own extinct beauty; that of the "used" idler is left without a sensation; that of the grasping Crœsus exists only to envy his heir; and that of the Machiavel who has no longer a voice in the cabinet, is but an unhappy spirit lingering to find its grave: but for the aged man of letters memory returns to her stores, and imagination is still on the wing amidst fresh discoveries and new designs. The others fall like dry leaves, but he drops like ripe fruit, and is valued when no longer on the tree.

The constitutional melancholy of JOHNSON often tinged his views of human life. When he asserted that "no man adds much to his stock of knowledge, or improves much after forty," his theory was overturned by his own experience; for his most interesting works were the productions of a very late period of life, formed out of the fresh knowledge with which he had then furnished himself.

The intellectual faculties, the latest to decline, are often vigorous in the decrepitude of age. The curious mind is still striking out into new pursuits, and the mind of genius is still creating. ANCORA IMPARO!—"Even yet I am learning!" was the concise inscription on an ingenious device of an old man placed in a child's go-cart, with an hour-glass upon it, which, it is said, Michael Angelo applied to his own vast genius in his ninetieth year. Painters have improved even to extreme old age: West's last works were his best, and Titian was greatest on the verge of his century. Poussin was delighted with the discovery of this circumstance in the lives of painters. "As I grow older, I feel the desire of surpassing myself." And it was in the last years of his life, that with the finest poetical invention, he painted the allegorical pictures of the Seasons. A man of letters in his sixtieth

year once told me, "It is but of late years that I have learnt the right use of books and the art of reading."

Time, the great destroyer of other men's happiness, only enlarges the patrimony of literature to its possessor. A learned and highly intellectual friend once said to me, "If I have acquired more knowledge these last four years than I had hitherto, I shall add materially to my stores in the next four years; and so at every subsequent period of my life, should I acquire only in the same proportion, the general mass of my knowledge will greatly accumulate. If we are not deprived by nature or misfortune of the means to pursue this perpetual augmentation of knowledge, I do not see but we may be still fully occupied and deeply interested even to the last day of our earthly term." Such is the delightful thought of Owen Feltham; "If I die to-morrow, my life will be somewhat the sweeter to-day for knowledge." The perfectibility of the human mind, the animating theory of the eloquent De Staël, consists in the mass of our ideas, to which every age will now add, by means unknown to preceding generations. Imagination was born at once perfect, and her arts find a term to their progress; but there is no boundary to knowledge nor the discovery of thought.

How beautiful in the old age of the literary character was the plan which a friend of mine pursued! His mind, like a mirror whose quicksilver had not decayed, reflected all objects to the last. Full of learned studies and versatile curiosity, he annually projected a summer-tour on the Continent to some remarkable spot. The local associations were an unfailing source of agreeable impressions to a mind so well prepared, and he presented his friends with a "Voyage Littéraire," as a new-year's gift. In such pursuits, where life is "rather wearing out than rusting out," as Bishop Cumberland expressed it, scarcely shall we feel those continued menaces of death which shake the old age of men of no intellectual pursuits, who are dying so many years.

Active enjoyments in the decline of life, then, constitute the happiness of literary men. The study of the arts and literature spreads a sunshine over the winter of their days. In the solitude and the night of human life, they discover that unregarded kindness of nature, which has given flowers that only open in the evening, and only bloom through the night-season. NECKER perceived the influence of late studies in life; for he tells us, that "the era of threescore and ten is an agreeable age for writing; your mind has not lost its vigour, and envy leaves you in peace."

The opening of one of LA MOTHE LE VAYER'S Treatises is striking: "I should but ill return the favours God has granted me in the eightieth year of my age, should I allow myself to give

way to that shameless want of occupation which all my life I have condemned;" and the old man proceeds with his "Observations on the Composition and Reading of Books." "If man be a bubble of air, it is then time that I should hasten my task; for my eightieth year admonishes me to get my baggage together ere I leave the world," wrote VARRO, in opening his curious treatise *de Re Rustica,* which the sage lived to finish, and which, after nearly two thousand years, the world possesses. "My works are many, and I am old; yet I still can fatigue and tire myself with writing more," says PETRARCH in his Epistle to Posterity. The literary character has been fully occupied in the eightieth and the ninetieth year of life. ISAAC WALTON still glowed while writing some of the most interesting biographies in his eighty-fifth year, and in the ninetieth enriched the poetical world with the first publication of a romantic tale by Chalkhill, "the friend of Spenser." BODMER, beyond eighty, was occupied on Homer, and WIELAND on Cicero's Letters [1].

But the delight of opening a new pursuit, or a new course of reading, imparts the vivacity and novelty of youth even to old age. The revolutions of modern chemistry kindled the curiosity of Dr. Reid to his latest days, and he studied by various means, to prevent the decay of his faculties, and to remedy the deficiencies of one failing sense by the increased activity of another. A late popular author, when advanced in life, discovered, in a class of reading to which he had never been accustomed, a profuse supply of fresh furniture for his mind. This felicity was the delightfulness of the old age of GOETHE—literature, art, and science, formed his daily inquiries; and this venerable genius, prompt to receive each novel impression, was a companion for the youthful, and a communicator of knowledge even for the most curious.

Even the steps of time are retraced, and we resume the possessions we seemed to have lost; for in advanced life a return to our early studies refreshes and renovates the spirits: we open the poets who made us enthusiasts, and the philosophers who taught us to think, with a new source of feeling acquired by our own experience. ADAM SMITH confessed his satisfaction at this pleasure to professor Dugald Stewart, while "he was re-perusing, with the enthusiasm of a student, the tragic poets of ancient Greece, and Sophocles and Euripides lay open on his table."

> Dans ses veines toujours un jeune sang bouillone,
> Et Sophocle à cent ans peint encore Antigone.

The calm philosophic Hume found that death only could in-

[1] See Curiosities of Literature, on "The progress of old age in new studies."

terrupt the keen pleasure he was again receiving from Lucian, inspiring at the moment a humorous self-dialogue with Charon. "Happily," said this philosopher, "on retiring from the world, I found my taste for reading return, even with greater avidity." We find GIBBON, after the close of his History, returning with an appetite as keen to "a full repast on Homer and Aristophanes, and involving himself in the philosophic maze of the writings of Plato." Lord WOODHOUSELEE found the recomposition of his "Lectures on History" so fascinating in the last period of his life, that Mr. Alison informs us, "it rewarded him with that *peculiar delight,* which has been often observed in the later years of literary men; the delight of returning again to the studies of their youth, and of feeling under the snows of age the cheerful memories of their spring."

Not without a sense of exultation has the literary character felt this peculiar happiness, in the unbroken chain of his habits and his feelings. HOBBES exulted that he had outlived his enemies, and was still the same Hobbes; and to demonstrate the reality of this existence, published, in the eighty-seventh yearof his age, his version of the Odyssey, and the following year his Iliad. Of the happy results of literary habits in advanced life, the Count DE TRESSAN, the elegant abridger of the old French romances, in his "literary advice to his children" has drawn a most pleasing picture. With a taste for study, which he found rather inconvenient in the movable existence of a man of the world, and a military wanderer, he had, however, contrived to reserve an hour or two every day for literary pursuits. The men of science, with whom he had chiefly associated, appear to have turned his passion to observation and knowledge, rather than towards imagination and feeling; the combination formed a wreath for his gray hairs. When Count de Tressan retired from a brilliant to an affectionate circle, amidst his family, he pursued his literary tastes, with the vivacity of a young author inspired by the illusion of fame. At the age of seventy-five, with the imagination of a poet, he abridged, he translated, he recomposed his old Chivalric Romances, and his reanimated fancy struck fire in the veins of the old man. Among the first designs of his retirement was a singular philosophical legacy for his children. It was a view of the history and progress of the human mind—of its principles, its errors, and its advantages, as these were reflected in himself; in the dawnings of his taste, and the secret inclinations of his mind, which the men of genius of the age with whom he associated had developed. Expatiating on their memory, he calls on his children to witness the happiness of study, so evident in those pleasures which were soothing and adorning his old age. "Without knowledge,

without literature," exclaims the venerable enthusiast, "in whatever rank we are born, we can only resemble the vulgar." To the centenary FONTENELLE the Count DE TRESSAN was chiefly indebted for the happy life he derived from the cultivation of literature; and when this man of a hundred years died, TRESSAN, himself on the borders of the grave, would offer the last fruits of his mind in an *éloge* to his ancient master. It was the voice of the dying to the dead, a lost moment of the love and sensibility of genius, which feeble life could not extinguish.

The genius of CICERO, inspired by the love of literature, has thrown something delightful over this latest season of life, in his *de Senectute*. To have written on old age, in old age, is to have obtained a triumph over Time [1].

When the literary character shall discover himself to be like a stranger in a new world, when all that he loved has not life, and all that lives has no love for old age: when his ear has ceased to listen, and nature has locked up the man within himself, he may still expire amidst his busied thoughts. Such aged votaries, like the old bees, have been found dying in their honeycombs. Let them preserve but the flame alive on the altar, and at the last moments they may be found in the act of sacrifice! The venerable BEDE, the instructor of his generation, and the historian for so many successive ones, expired in the act of dictating. Such was the fate of PETRARCH, who, not long before his death, had written to a friend, "I read, I write, I think; such is my life, and my pleasures as they were in my youth." Petrarch was found lying on a folio in his library, from which volume he had been busied in making extracts for the biography of his countrymen. His domestics having often observed him studying in that reclining posture for days together, it was long before they discovered that the poet was no more. The fate of LEIBNITZ was similar: he was found dead with the Argenis of Barclay in his hand; he had been studying the style of that political romance as a model for his intended history of the House of Brunswick. The literary death of BARTHELEMY affords a remarkable proof of the force of uninterrupted habits of study. He had been slightly looking over the newspaper, when suddenly he called for a Horace, opened the volume, and found the passage, on which he paused for a moment; and then, too feeble to speak, made a sign to bring him Dacier's; but his hands were already cold, the Horace fell—and the classical and dying man of letters sunk into a fainting fit, from which he never recovered. Such too was the fate, perhaps now told for the first time, of the great Lord CLARENDON. It was in the midst of

[1] Spurinna, or the Comforts of Old Age, by the late Sir Thomas Bernard, was written a year or two before he died.

composition that his pen suddenly dropped from his hand on the paper, he took it up again, and again it dropped : deprived of the sense of touch—his hand without motion—the earl perceived himself struck by palsy—and the life of the noble exile closed amidst the warmth of a literary work unfinished!

CHAPTER XXIII.

Universality of Genius.—Limited notion of genius entertained by the ancients.—Opposite faculties act with diminished force.—Men of genius excel only in a single art.

THE ancients addicted themselves to one species of composition; the tragic poet appears not to have entered into the province of comedy, nor, as far as we know, were their historians writers of verse. Their artists worked on the same principle; and from Pliny's account of the ancient sculptors, we may infer that with them the true glory of genius consisted in carrying to perfection a single species of their art. They did not exercise themselves indifferently on all subjects, but cultivated the favourite ones which they had chosen from the impulse of their own imagination. The hand which could copy nature in a human form, with the characteristics of the age and the sex, and the occupations of life, refrained from attempting the colossal and ideal majesty of a divinity; and when one of these sculptors, whose skill was pre-eminent in casting animals, had exquisitely wrought the glowing coursers for a triumphal car, he requested the aid of Praxiteles to place the driver in the chariot, that his work might not be disgraced by a human form of inferior beauty to his animals. Alluding to the devotion of an ancient sculptor to his labours, Madame de Staël has finely said, "The history of his life was the history of his statue."

Such was the limited conception which the ancients formed of genius. They confined it to particular objects or departments in art. But there is a tendency among men of genius to ascribe a universality of power to a master-intellect. Dryden imagined that Virgil could have written satire equally with Juvenal, and some have hardily defined genius as "a power to accomplish all that we undertake." But literary history will detect this fallacy, and the failures of so many eminent men are instructions from Nature which must not be lost on us.

No man of genius put forth more expansive promises of universal power than LEIBNITZ. Science, imagination, history, criticism, fertilised the richest of human soils; yet LEIBNITZ with immense powers and perpetual knowledge, dissipated them

in the multiplicity of his pursuits. "the first of philosophers," the late Professor Playfair observed, "has left nothing in the immense tract of his intellect which can be distinguished as a monument of his genius." As a universalist, VOLTAIRE remains unparalleled in ancient or in modern times. This voluminous idol of our neighbours stands without a rival in literature; but an exception, even if this were one, cannot overturn a fundamental principle, for we draw our conclusions not from the fortune of one man of genius, but from the fate of many. The real claims of this great writer to invention and originality are as moderate as his size and his variety are astonishing. The wonder of his ninety volumes is that he singly consists of a number of men of the second order, making up one great man; for unquestionably some could rival Voltaire in any single province, but no one but himself has possessed them all. Voltaire discovered a new art, that of creating a supplement to the genius which had preceded him; and without Corneille, Racine, and Ariosto, it would be difficult to conjecture what sort of a poet Voltaire could have been. He was master, too, of a secret in composition, which consisted in a new style and manner. His style promotes, but never interrupts thinking, while it renders all subjects familiar to our comprehension: his manner consists in placing objects well known in new combinations; he ploughed up the fallow lands, and renovated the worn-out exhausted soils. Swift defined a good style, as "proper words in proper places." Voltaire's impulse was of a higher flight, "proper thoughts on proper subjects." Swift's idea was that of a grammarian. Voltaire's feeling was that of a philosopher. We are only considering this universal writer in his literary character, which has fewer claims to the character of an inventor, than several who never attained to his celebrity.

Are the original powers of genius then limited to a single art, and even to departments in that art? May not men of genius plume themselves with the vain glory of universality? Let us dare to call this a vain glory; for he who stands the first in his class, does not really add to the distinctive character of his genius, by a versatility which, however apparently successful, is always subordinate to the great character on which his fame rests. It is only that character which bears the raciness of the soil; it is only that impulse whose solitary force stamps the authentic work of genius. To execute equally well on a variety of subjects, may raise a suspicion of the nature of the executive power. Should it be mimetic, the ingenious writer may remain absolutely destitute of every claim to genius. DU CLOS has been refused the honours of genius by the French critics, because he wrote equally well on a variety of subjects.

I know that this principle is contested by some of great name, who have themselves evinced a wonderful variety of powers. This penurious principle flatters not that egotism which great writers share in common with the heroes who have aimed at universal empire. Besides, this universality may answer many temporary purposes. These writers may however observe, that their contemporaries are continually disputing on the merits of their versatile productions, and the most contrary opinions are even formed by their admirers; but their great individual character standing by itself, and resembling no other, is a positive excellence. It is time only, who is influenced by no name, and will never, like contemporaries, mistake the true work of genius.

And if it be true that the primary qualities of the mind are so different in men of genius as to render them more apt for one class than for another, it would seem, that whenever a pre-eminent faculty had shaped the mind, a faculty of the most contrary nature must act with a diminished force, and the other often with an exclusive one. An impassioned and pathetic genius has never become equally eminent as a comic genius. RICHARDSON and FIELDING could not have written each other's works. Could BUTLER, who excelled in wit and satire, like MILTON have excelled in sentiment and imagination? Some eminent men have shown remarkable failures in their attempts to cultivate opposite departments in their own pursuits. The tragedies and the comedies of DRYDEN equally prove that he was not blest with a dramatic genius. CIBBER, a spirited comic writer, was noted for the most degrading failures in tragedy; while ROWE, successful in the softer tones of the tragic muse, proved as luckless a candidate for the smiles of the comic, as the pathetic OTWAY. LA FONTAINE, unrivalled humorist as a fabulist, found his opera hissed, and his romance utterly tedious. The true genius of STERNE was of a descriptive and pathetic cast, and his humour and ribaldry were a perpetual violation of his natural bent. ALFIERI's great tragic powers could not strike out into comedy or wit. SCARRON declared he intended to write a tragedy. The experiment was not made, but with his strong cast of mind and habitual associations, we probably have lost a new sort of "Roman comique." CICERO failed in poetry, ADDISON in oratory, VOLTAIRE in comedy, and JOHNSON in tragedy. The Anacreontic poet remains only Anacreontic in his epic. With the fine arts the same occurrence has happened. It has been observed in painting, that the school eminent for design was deficient in colouring; while those who with Titian's warmth could make the blood circulate in the flesh, could never rival the expression and anatomy of even the middling artists of the Roman school.

Even among those rare and gifted minds which have startled us by the versatility of their powers, whence do they derive the high character of their genius? Their durable claims are substantiated by what is inherent in themselves—what is individual—and not by that flexibility which may include so much which others can equal. We rate them by their positive originality, not by their variety of powers. When we think of YOUNG, it is only of his "Night Thoughts," not of his tragedies, nor his poems, nor even of his satires, which others have rivalled or excelled. Of AKENSIDE the solitary work of genius is his great poem; his numerous odes are not of a higher order than those of other ode-writers. Had POPE only composed odes and tragedies, the great philosophical poet, master of human life and of perfect verse, had not left an undying name. TENIERS, unrivalled in the walk of his genius, degraded history by the meanness of his conceptions. Such instances abound, and demonstrate an important truth in the history of genius, that we cannot, however we may incline, enlarge the natural extent of our genius, any more than we can "add a cubit to our stature." We may force it into variations, but in multiplying mediocrity, or in doing what others can do, we add nothing to genius.

So true is it that men of genius appear only to excel in a single art, or even in a single department of art, that it is usual with men of taste to resort to a particular artist for a particular object. Would you ornament your house by interior decorations, to whom would you apply if you sought the perfection of art, but to *different artists,* of very distinct characters in their invention and their execution? For your Arabesques you would call in the artist whose delicacy of touch and playfulness of ideas are not to be expected from the grandeur of the historical painter, or the sweetness of the *Paysagiste.* Is it not evident that men of genius *excel* only in one department of their art, and that whatever they do with the utmost original perfection, cannot be equally done by another man of genius? He whose undeviating genius guards itself in its own true sphere, has the greatest chance of encountering no rival. He is a Dante, a Milton, a Michael Angelo, a Raphael: his hand will not labour on what the Italians call *pasticcios;* and he remains not unimitated, but inimitable.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Literature an avenue to glory.—An intellectual nobility not chimerical, but created by public opinion.—Literary honours of various nations.—Local associations with the memory of the man of genius.

LITERATURE is an avenue to glory, ever open for those ingenious men who are deprived of honours or of wealth. Like that illustrious Roman who owed nothing to his ancestors, *videtur ex se natus*, these seem self-born; and in the baptism of fame, they have given themselves their name. Bruyère has finely said of men of genius, "These men have neither ancestors nor posterity; they alone compose their whole race."

But AKENSIDE, we have seen, blushed when his lameness reminded him of the fall of one of his father's cleavers; PRIOR, the son of a vintner, could not endure to be reminded, though by his favourite Horace, that "the cask retains its flavour;" like VOITURE, another descendant of a *marchand de vin*, whose heart sickened over that which exhilarates all other hearts, whenever his opinion of its *quality* was maliciously consulted. All these instances too evidently prove that genius is subject to the most vulgar infirmities.

But some have thought more courageously. The amiable ROLLIN was the son of a cutler, but the historian of nations never felt his dignity compromised by his birth. Even late in life, he ingeniously alluded to his first occupation, for we find an epigram of his in sending a knife for a new-year's gift, "informing his friend, that, should this present appear to come rather from Vulcan than from Minerva, it should not surprise, for," adds the epigrammatist, "it was from the cavern of the Cyclops I began to direct my foot-steps towards Parnassus." The great political negotiator, Cardinal D'OSSAT, was elevated by his genius from an orphan state of indigence, and was alike destitute of ancestry, of titles, even of parents. On the day of his creation, when others of noble extraction assumed new titles from the seignorial names of their ancient houses, he was at a loss to fix on one. Having asked the pope whether he should choose that of his bishopric, his holiness requested him to preserve his plain family name, which he had rendered famous by his own genius. The sons of a sword-maker, a potter, and a tax-gatherer, were the greatest of the orators, the most majestic of the poets, and the most graceful of the satirists of antiquity; Demosthenes, Virgil, and Horace. The eloquent Massillon, the brilliant Fléchier, Rousseau and Diderot; Johnson, Goldsmith, and Franklin, arose amidst the most humble avocations.

Vespasian raised a statue to the historian JOSEPHUS, though a Jew; and the Athenians one to Æsop, though a slave. Even among great military republics the road to public honour was open, not alone to heroes and patricians, but to that solitary genius which derives from itself all which it gives to the public, and nothing from its birth or the public situation it occupies.

It is the prerogative of genius to elevate obscure men to the higher class of society. If the influence of wealth in the present day have created a new aristocracy of its own, where they already begin to be jealous of their ranks, we may assert that genius creates a sort of intellectual nobility, which is now conferred by public feeling; as heretofore the surnames of "the African," and of "Coriolanus," won by valour, associated with the names of the conqueror of Africa and the vanquisher of Corioli. Were men of genius, as such, to have armorial bearings, they might consist, not of imaginary things, of griffins and chimeras, but of deeds performed and of public works in existence. When DONDI raised the great astronomical clock at the University of Padua which was long the admiration of Europe, it gave a name and nobility to its maker and all his descendants. There still lives a Marquis Dondi dal' Horologio. Sir HUGH MIDDLETON, in memory of his vast enterprise, changed his former arms to bear three piles, to perpetuate the interesting circumstance, that by these instruments, he had strengthened the works he had invented, when his genius poured forth the waters through our metropolis, thereby distinguishing it from all others in the world. Should not EVELYN have inserted an oak-tree in his bearings? for his "Sylva" occasioned the plantation of "many millions of timber-trees," and the present navy of Great Britain has been constructed with the oaks which the genius of Evelyn planted. There was an eminent Italian musician, who had a piece of music inscribed on his tomb; and I have heard of a Dutch mathematician, who had a calculation for his epitaph.

We who were reproached for a coldness in our national character, have caught the inspiration and enthusiasm for the works and the celebrity of genius; the symptoms indeed were long dubious. REYNOLDS wished to have one of his own pictures, "Contemplation in the figure of an Angel," carried at his funeral; a custom not unusual with foreign painters; but it was not deemed prudent to comply with this last wish of the great artist, from the fears entertained as to the manner in which a London populace might have received such a novelty. This shows that the profound feeling of art is still confined within a circle among us, of which hereafter the circumference perpetually enlarging, may embrace even the whole people. If the public have borrowed the names of some lords to dignify a

"Sandwich" and a "Spencer," we may be allowed to raise into titles of literary nobility those distinctions which the public voice has attached to some authors; *Æschylus* Potter, *Athenian* Stuart, and *Anacreon* Moore. BUTLER, in his own day, was more generally known by the single and singular name of *Hudibras,* than by his own.

This intellectual nobility is not chimerical. Such titles must be found indeed, in the years which are to come; yet the prelude of their fame distinguishes these men from the crowd. Whenever the rightful possessor appears, will not the eyes of all spectators be fixed on him? I allude to scenes which I have witnessed. Will not even literary honours superadd a nobility to nobility; and make a name instantly recognised which might otherwise be hidden under its rank, and remain unknown by its title? Our illustrious list of literary noblemen is far more glorious than the satirical "Catalogne of Noble Authors," drawn up by a polished and heartless cynic, who has pointed his brilliant shafts at all who were chivalrous in spirit, or related to the family of genius. One may presume on the existence of this intellectual nobility, from the extraordinary circumstance that the great have actually felt a jealousy of the literary rank. But no rivalry can exist in the solitary honour conferred on an author. It is not an honour derived from birth nor creation, but from PUBLIC OPINION, and inseparable from his name, as an essential quality; for the diamond will sparkle and the rose will be fragrant, otherwise it is no diamond or rose. The great may well condescend to be humble to genius, since genius pays its homage in becoming proud of that humility. Cardinal Richelieu was mortified at the celebrity of the unbending CORNEILLE; so were several noblemen at POPE's indifference to their rank; and MAGLIABECHI, the book prodigy of his age, whom every literary stranger visited at Florence, assured Lord Raley that the Duke of Tuscany had become jealous of the attention he was receiving from foreigners, as they usually went to visit MAGLIABECHI before the grand duke.

A confession by MONTESQUIEU states, with open candour, a fact in his life which confirms this jealousy of the great with the literary character. "On my entering into life I was spoken of as a man of talents, and people of condition gave me a favourable reception; but when the success of my Persian Letters proved perhaps that I was not unworthy of my reputation, and the public began to esteem me, *my reception with the great was discouraging, and I experienced innumerable mortifications.*" Montesquieu subjoins a reflection sufficiently humiliating for the mere nobleman: "The great, inwardly wounded with the glory of a celebrated name, seek to humble

it. In general he only can patiently endure the fame of others, who deserves fame himself." This sort of jealousy unquestionably prevailed in the late Lord ORFORD, a wit, a man of the world, and a man of rank; but while he considered literature as a mere amusement, he was mortified at not obtaining literary celebrity; he felt his authorial always beneath his personal character. It fell to my lot to develop his real feelings respecting himself and the literary men of his age [1].

Who was the dignified character, Lord Chesterfield or Samuel Johnson, when the great author, proud of his protracted and vast labour, rejected his lordship's tardy and trivial patronage? "I value myself," says Swift, "upon making the ministry desire to be acquainted with PARNELL, and not Parnell with the ministry." PIRON would not suffer the literary character to be lowered in his presence. Entering the apartment of a nobleman, who was conducting another peer to the stair's-head, the latter stopped to make way for Piron: "Pass on, my lord," said the noble master; "pass, he is only a poet." PIRON replied, "Since our qualities are declared, I shall take my rank," and placed himself before the lord. Nor is this pride, the true source of elevated character, refused to the great artist as well as the great author. MICHAEL ANGELO, invited by Julius II. to the court of Rome, found that intrigue had indisposed his holiness towards him, and more than once the great artist was suffered to linger in attendance in the ante-chamber. One day the indignant man of genius exclaimed, "Tell his holiness, if he want me, he must look for me elsewhere." He flew back to his beloved Florence, to proceed with that celebrated cartoon which afterwards became a favourite study with all artists. Thrice the pope wrote for his return, and at length menaced the little state of Tuscany with war, if Michael Angelo prolonged his absence. He returned. The sublime artist knelt at the feet of the father of the church, turning aside his troubled countenance in silence. An intermeddling bishop offered himself as a mediator, apologising for our artist by observing, that "Of this proud humour are these painters made!" Julius turned to this pitiable mediator, and, as Vasari tells, used a switch on this occasion, observing, "You speak injuriously of him, while I am silent. It is you who

[1] Calamities of Authors. I printed, in 1812, extracts from Walpole's correspondence with Cole. Some have considered that there was a severity of delineation in my character of Horace Walpole. I was the *first*, in my impartial view of his literary character, to proclaim to the world what it has now fully sanctioned, that "His most pleasing, if not his great talent, lay in *letter-writing*; here he was without a rival. His correspondence abounded with literature, criticism, and wit of the most original and brilliant composition." This was published several years before the recent collection of his letters.

are ignorant." Raising Michael Angelo, Julius II. embraced the man of genius.

"I can make lords of you every day, but I cannot create a Titian," said the Emperor Charles V. to his courtiers, who had become jealous of the hours and the half-hours which the monarch stole from them that he might converse with the man of genius at his work. There is an elevated intercourse between power and genius; and if they are deficient in reciprocal esteem, neither are great. The intellectual nobility seems to have been asserted by De Harlay, a great French statesman; for when the Academy was once not received with royal honours, he complained to the French monarch, observing, that when "a man of letters was presented to Francis I. for the first time the king always advanced three steps from the throne to receive him." It is something more than an ingenious thought, when Fontenelle, in his *éloge* on LEIBNITZ, alluding to the death of Queen Anne, adds of her successor, that "The Elector of Hanover united under his dominion an electorate, the three kingdoms of Great Britain, and LEIBNITZ and NEWTON."

If ever the voice of individuals can recompense a life of literary labour, it is in speaking a foreign accent. This sounds like the distant plaudit of posterity. The distance of space between the literary character and the inquirer, in some respects represents the distance of time which separates the author from the next age. FONTENELLE was never more gratified than when a Swede, arriving at the gates of Paris, inquired of the custom-house officers where Fontenelle resided, and expressed his indignation that not one of them had ever heard of his name. HOBBES expresses his proud delight that his portrait was sought after by foreigners, and that the Great Duke of Tuscany made the philosopher the object of his first inquiries. CAMDEN was not insensible to the visits of German noblemen, who were desirous of seeing the British Pliny; and POCOCK, while he received no aid from patronage at home for his Oriental studies, never relaxed in those unrequited labours, animated by the learned foreigners, who hastened to see and converse with this prodigy of Eastern learning.

Yes! to the very presence of the man of genius will the world spontaneously pay their tribute of respect, of admiration, or of love. Many a pilgrimage has he lived to receive, and many a crowd has followed his footsteps! There are days in the life of genius which repay its sufferings. DEMOSTHENES confessed he was pleased when even a fishwoman of Athens pointed him out. CORNEILLE had his particular seat in the theatre, and the audience would rise to salute him when he entered. At the presence of RAYNAL in the House of Commons, the speaker

was requested to suspend the debate till that illustrious foreigner, who had written on the English parliament, was accommodated with a seat. SPINOSA, when he gained an humble livelihood by grinding optical glasses, at an obscure village in Holland, was visited by the first general in Europe, who, for the sake of this philosophical conference, suspended the march of the army.

In all ages and in all countries has this feeling been created. It is neither a temporary ebullition nor an individual honour. It comes out of the heart of man. It is the passion of great souls. In Spain, whatever was most beautiful in its kind was described by the name of the great Spanish bard: everything excellent was called a Lope. Italy would furnish a volume of the public honours decreed to literary men; nor is that spirit extinct, though the national character has fallen by the chance of fortune. METASTASIO and TIRABOSCHI received what had been accorded to PETRARCH and to POGGIO. Germany, patriotic to its literary characters, is the land of the enthusiasm of genius. On the borders of the Linnet, in the public walk of Zurich, the monument of GESSNER, erected by the votes of his fellow-citizens, attests their sensibility; and a solemn funeral honoured the remains of KLOPSTOCK, led by the senate of Hamburgh, with fifty thousand votaries, so penetrated by one universal sentiment, that this multitude preserved a mournful silence, and the interference of the police ceased to be necessary through the city at the solemn burial of the man of genius. Has even Holland proved insensible? The statue of ERASMUS, in Rotterdam, still animates her young students, and offers a noble example to her neighbours of the influence even of the sight of the statue of a man of genius. Travellers never fail to mention ERASMUS when Basle occupies their recollections; so that, as Bayle observes, "He has rendered the place of his death as celebrated as that of his birth." In France, since Francis I. created genius, and Louis XIV. protected it, the impulse has been communicated to the French people. There the statues of their illustrious men spread inspiration on the spots which living they would have haunted:—in their theatres, the great dramatists; in their Institute, their illustrious authors; in their public edifices, congenial men of genius [1]. This is worthy of the country which privileged the family of LA FONTAINE to be for ever exempt from taxes, and decreed that "the pro-

[1] We cannot bury the fame of our English worthies—that exists before us, independent of ourselves; but we bury the influence of their inspiring presence in those immortal memorials of genius easy to be read by all men—their statues and their busts, consigning them to spots seldom visited, and often too obscure to be viewed.

ductions of the mind were not seizable," when the creditors of CREBILLON would have attached the produce of his tragedies.

These distinctive honours accorded to genius, were in unison with their decree respecting the will of BAYLE. It was the subject of a lawsuit between the heir of the will and the inheritor by blood. The latter contested that this great literary character, being a fugitive for religion, and dying in a proscribed country, was divested by law of the power to dispose of his property, and that our author, when resident in Holland, in a civil sense was dead. In the parliament of Toulouse the judge decided that learned men are free in all countries; that he who had sought in a foreign land an asylum from his love of letters, was no fugitive; that it was unworthy of France to treat as a stranger a son in whom she gloried, and he protested against the notion of a civil death to such a man as BAYLE, whose name was living throughout Europe. This judicial decision in France was in unison with that of the senate of Rotterdam, who declared of the emigrant BAYLE, that "Such a man should not be considered as a foreigner."

Even the most common objects are consecrated when associated with the memory of the man of genius. We still seek for his tomb on the spot where it has vanished. The enthusiasts of genius still wander on the hills of Pausilippo, and muse on VIRGIL to retrace his landscape. There is a grove at Magdalen College which retains the name of ADDISON'S walk, where still the student will linger; and there is a cave at Macao, which is still visited by the Portuguese from a national feeling, for CAMOENS there passed many days in composing his Lusiad. When PETRARCH was passing by his native town, he was received with the honours of his fame; but when the heads of the town conducted Petrarch to the house where the poet was born, and informed him that the proprietor had often wished to make alterations, but that the towns-people had risen to insist that the house which was consecrated by the birth of Petrarch should be preserved unchanged; this was a triumph more affecting to Petrarch than his coronation at Rome [1].

In the village of Certaldo is still shown the house of BOCCACCIO; and on a turret are seen the arms of the Medici, which

[1] On this passage I find a remarkable manuscript note by Lord Byron.

"It would have pained me more that 'the proprietor' should have 'often' wished to make alterations than it could give pleasure that the rest of Arezzo rose against his *right* (for *right* he had); the depreciation of the lowest of mankind is more painful than the applause of the highest is pleasing; the sting of a scorpion is more in torture than the possession of anything could be in rapture."

they had sculptured there, with an inscription alluding to a small house and a name which filled the world; and in Ferrara, the small house which ARIOSTO built was purchased, to be preserved, by the municipality, and there they still show the poet's study; and under his bust a simple but affecting tribute to genius records, that "Ludovico Ariósto in this apartment wrote." Two hundred and eighty years after the death of the divine poet, it was purchased and restored by the *podesta*, with the money of the *commune*, that "the public veneration may be maintained." "Foreigners," says Anthony Wood of MILTON, "have, out of pure devotion, gone to Bread-street to see the house and chamber where he was born;" and at Paris the house which VOLTAIRE inhabited, and at Ferney his study, are both preserved inviolate. In the study of MONTESQUIEU at La Brede, near Bordeaux, the proprietor has preserved all the furniture, without altering anything, that the apartment where this great man meditated on his immortal work should want for nothing to assist the reveries of the spectator; and on the side of the chimney is still seen a place which while writing he was accustomed to rub his feet against, as they rested on it. In a keep or dungeon of this feudal *chateau*, the local association suggested to the philosopher his chapter on "The Liberty of the Citizen." It is the second chapter of the twelfth book, of which the close is remarkable.

Let us regret that the little villa of POPE, and the poetic Leasowes of SHENSTONE, have fallen the victims of property as much as if destroyed by the barbarous hand which cut down the consecrated tree of Shakespeare. The very apartment of a man of genius, the chair he studied in, the table he wrote on, are contemplated with curiosity; the spot is full of local impressions. And all this happens from an unsatisfied desire to see and hear him whom we never can see nor hear; yet in a moment of illusion, if we listen to a traditional conversation, if we can revive one of his feelings, if we can catch but a dim image, we reproduce this man of genius before us, on whose features we so often dwell. Even the rage of the military spirit has taught itself to respect the abode of genius; and Cæsar and Sylla, who never spared the blood of their own Rome, alike felt their spirit rebuked, and alike saved the literary city of Athens. Antiquity has preserved a beautiful incident of this nature, in the noble reply of the artist PROTOGENES. When the city of Rhodes was taken by Demetrius, the man of genius was discovered in his garden, tranquilly finishing a picture. "How is it that you do not participate in the general alarm?" asked the conqueror. "Demetrius, you war against the Rhodians, but not against the fine arts," replied the man of genius. Demetrius had already

shown this by his conduct, for he forbade firing that part of the city where the artist resided.

The house of the man of genius has been spared amidst contending empires, from the days of Pindar to those of Buffon; "the Historian of Nature's" chateau was preserved from this elevated feeling by Prince Schwartzenberg, as our MARLBOROUGH had performed the same glorious office in guarding the hallowed asylum of FENELON. In the grandeur of Milton's verse we perceive the feeling he associated with this literary honour—

> "The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
> The house of Pindarus when temple and tower
> Went to the ground———."

And the meanest things, the very household stuff, associated with the memory of the man of genius, become the objects of our affections. At a festival in honour of THOMSON the poet, the chair in which he composed part of his Seasons was produced, and appears to have communicated some of the raptures to which he was liable who had sat in that chair. RABELAIS, amongst his drollest inventions, could not have imagined that his old cloak would have been preserved in the university of Montpelier for future doctors to wear on the day they took their degree; nor could SHAKESPEARE have supposed, with all his fancy, that the mulberry-tree which he planted would have been multiplied into relics. But in such instances the feeling is right, with a wrong direction; and while the populace are exhausting their emotions on an old tree, an old chair, and an old cloak, they are paying that involuntary tribute to genius which forms its pride, and will generate the race.

CHAPTER XXV.

Influence of Authors on society, and of society on Authors.—National tastes a source of literary prejudices.—True Genius always the organ of its nation.—Master-writers preserve the distinct national character.—Genius the organ of the state of the age.—Causes of its suppression in a people.—Often invented, but neglected.—The natural gradations of genius.—Men of Genius produce their usefulness in privacy.—The public mind is now the creation of the public writer.—Politicians affect to deny this principle.—Authors stand between the governors and the governed.—A view of the solitary Author in his study.—They create an epoch in history.—Influence of popular Authors.—The immortality of thought.—The Family of Genius illustrated by their genealogy.

LITERARY fame, which is the sole preserver of all other fame, participates little, and remotely, in the remuneration and the honours of professional characters. All other professions press more immediately on the wants and attentions of men, than the occupations of LITERARY CHARACTERS, who from their habits

are secluded; producing their usefulness often at a late period of life, and not always valued by their own generation.

It is not the commercial character of a nation which inspired veneration in mankind, nor will its military power engage the affections of its neighbours. So late as in 1700, the Italian Gemelli told all Europe that he could find nothing among us but our *writings* to distinguish us from a people of barbarians. It was long considered that our genius partook of the density and variableness of our climate, and that we were incapacitated even by situation from the enjoyments of those beautiful arts which had not yet travelled to us,—as if Nature herself had designed to disjoin us from more polished nations and brighter skies.

At length we have triumphed! Our philosophers, our poets, and our historians, are printed at foreign presses. This is a perpetual victory, and establishes the ascendancy of our genius, as much at least as the commerce and the prowess of England. This singular revolution in the history of the human mind, and by its reaction this singular revolution in human affairs, was effected by a glorious succession of AUTHORS, who have enabled our nation to arbitrate among the nations of Europe, and to possess ourselves of their involuntary esteem by discoveries in science, by principles in philosophy, by truths in history, and even by the graces of fiction; and there is not a man of genius among foreigners who stands unconnected with our intellectual sovereignty. Even had our country displayed more limited resources than its awful powers have opened, and had the sphere of its dominion been closed by its island boundaries, if the same *national literary character* had predominated, we should have stood on the same eminence among our Continental rivals. The small cities of Athens and of Florence will perpetually attest the influence of the literary character over other nations. The one received the tribute of the mistress of the universe, when the Romans sent their youth to be educated at the Grecian city, while the other, at the revival of letters, beheld every polished European crowding to its little court.

In closing this imperfect work by attempting to ascertain the real influence of authors on society, it will be necessary to notice some curious facts in the history of genius.

The distinct literary tastes of different nations, and the repugnance they mutually betray for the master-writers of each other, is an important circumstance to the philosophical observer. These national tastes originate in modes of feeling, in customs, in idioms, and all the numerous associations prevalent among every people. The reciprocal influence of manners on taste, and of taste on manners—of government and religion on the literature of a people, and of their literature on the national charac-

ter, with other congenial objects of inquiry, still require a more ample investigation. Whoever attempts to reduce this diversity, and these strong contrasts of national tastes, to one common standard, by forcing such dissimilar objects into comparative parallels, or by trying them by conventional principles and arbitrary regulations, will often condemn what in truth his mind is inadequate to comprehend, and the experience of his associations to combine.

These attempts have been the fertile source in literature of what may be called national prejudices. The French nation insists that the northerns are defective in taste—the taste, they tell us, which is established at Paris, and which existed at Athens: the Gothic imagination of the north spurns at the timid copiers of the Latin classics, and interminable disputes prevail in their literature, as in their architecture and their painting. Philosophy discovers a fact of which taste seems little conscious; it is, that genius varies with the soil, and produces a nationality of taste. The feelings of mankind indeed have the same common source, but they must come to us through the medium and by the modifications of society. Love is a universal passion, but the poetry of love in different nations is peculiar to each; for every great poet belongs to his country. Petrarch, Lope de Vega, Racine, Shakespeare, and Sadi, would each express this universal passion by the most specific differences: and the style that would be condemned as unnatural by one people, might be habitual with another. The *concetti* of the Italian, the figurative style of the Persian, the swelling grandeur of the Spaniard, the classical correctness of the French, are all modifications of genius, relatively true to each particular writer. On national tastes critics are but wrestlers: the Spaniard will still prefer his Lope de Vega to the French Racine, or the English his Shakespeare, as the Italian his Tasso and his Petrarch. Hence all national writers are studied with enthusiasm by their own people, and their very peculiarities, offensive to others, with the natives constitute their excellences. Nor does this perpetual contest about the great writers of other nations solely arise from an association of patriotic glory, but really because these great native writers have most strongly excited the sympathies and conformed to the habitual tastes of their own people.

Hence then we deduce that true genius is the organ of its nation. The creative faculty is itself created; for it is the nation which first imparts an impulse to the character of genius. Such is the real source of those distinct tastes which we perceive in all great national authors. Every literary work, to ensure its success, must adapt itself to the sympathies and the understandings of the people it addresses. Hence those opposite characte-

ristics which are usually ascribed to the master-writers themselves, originate with the country, and not with the writer. LOPE DE VEGA and CALDERON in their dramas, and CERVANTES, who has left his name as the epithet of a peculiar grave humour, were Spaniards before they were men of genius. CORNEILLE, RACINE, and RABELAIS, are entirely of an opposite character to the Spaniards, having adapted their genius to their own declamatory and vivacious countrymen. PETRARCH and TASSO display a fancifulness in depicting the passions, as BOCCACCIO narrates his facetious stories, quite distinct from the inventions and style of northern writers. SHAKESPEARE is placed at a wider interval from all of them than they are from each other, and is as perfectly insular in his genius, as his own countrymen were in their customs, and their modes of thinking and feeling.

Thus the master-writers of every people preserve the distinct national character in their works; and hence that extraordinary enthusiasm with which every people read their own favourite authors; but in which others cannot participate, and for which, with all their national prejudices, they often recriminate on each other with false and even ludicrous criticism.

But genius is not only the organ of its nation; it is also that of the state of the times, and a great work usually originates in the age. Certain events must precede the man of genius, who often becomes only the vehicle of public feeling. MACHIAVEL has been reproached for propagating a political system subversive of all human honour and happiness; but was it Machiavel who formed his age, or the age which created Machiavel? Living among the petty principalities of Italy, where stratagem and assassination were the practices of those wretched courts, what did that calumniated genius more than lift the veil from a cabinet of banditti? MACHIAVEL alarmed the world by exposing a system subversive of all human virtue and happiness, and whether he meant it or not, certainly led the way to political freedom. On the same principle we may learn that BOCCACCIO would not have written so many indecent tales, had not the scandalous lives of the monks engaged public attention. This we may now regret; but the court of Rome felt the concealed satire, and that luxurious and numerous class in society never recovered from the chastisement.

MONTAIGNE has been censured for his universal scepticism, and for the unsettled notions he threw out on his motley page, which has been attributed to his incapacity of forming decisive opinions. "Que sçais-je?" was his motto. The same accusation may reach the gentle ERASMUS, who alike offended the old catholics and the new reformers. The real source of their va-

cillations we may discover in the age itself. It was one of controversy and of civil wars, when the minds of men were thrown into perpetual agitation, and opinions, like the victories of the parties, were every day changing sides.

Even in its advancement beyond the intelligence of its own age, genius is but progressive. In nature all is continuous; she makes no starts and leaps. Genius is said to soar, but we should rather say that genius climbs. Did the great VERULAM, or RAWLEIGH, or Dr. MORE, emancipate themselves from all the dreams of their age, from the occult agency of witchcraft, the astral influence, and the ghost and demon creed?

Before a particular man of genius can appear, certain events must arise to prepare the age for him. A great commercial nation, in the maturity of time, opened all the sources of wealth to the contemplation of ADAM SMITH. That extensive system of what is called political economy, could not have been produced at any other time; for before this period the materials of this work had but an imperfect existence, and the advances which this sort of science had made were only partial and preparatory. If the principle of Adam Smith's great work seems to confound the happiness of a nation with its wealth, we can scarcely reproach the man of genius, who we shall find is always reflecting back the feelings of his own nation, even in his most original speculations.

In works of pure imagination we trace the same march of the human intellect; and we discover in those inventions, which appear sealed by their originality, how much has been derived from the age and the people in which they were produced. Every work of genius is tinctured by the feelings, and often originates in the events, of the times. The *Inferno* of DANTE was caught from the popular superstitions of the age, and had been proceeded by the gross visions which the monks had forged, usually for their own purposes. "La Città dolente," and "la perduta gente," were familiar to the imaginations of the people, by the monkish visions, and it seems even by ocular illusions of Hell, exhibited in mysteries, with its gulfs of flame, and its mountains of ice, and the shrieks of the condemned. To produce the "Inferno" only required the giant step of genius, in the sombre, the awful, and the fierce DANTE. When the age of chivalry flourished, all breathed of love and courtesy; the great man was the great lover, and the great author the romancer. It was from his own age that MILTON derived his greatest blemish, —the introduction of school-divinity into poetry. In a polemical age, the poet, as well as the sovereign, reflected the reigning tastes.

There are accidents to which genius is liable, and by which it

is frequently suppressed in a people. The establishment of the Inquisition in Spain at one stroke annihilated all the genius of the country. Cervantes said that the Inquisition had spoilt many of his most delightful inventions; and unquestionably it silenced the wit and invention of a nation whose proverbs attest they possessed them even to luxuriance. All the Continental nations have boasted great native painters and architects, while these arts were long truly foreign to us. Theoretical critics, at a loss to account for this singularity, accused not only our climate, but even our diet, as the occult causes of our unfitness to cultivate them. Yet Montesquieu and Winkelmann might have observed, that the air of fens and marshes had not deprived the gross feeders of Holland and Flanders of admirable artists. We have been outrageously calumniated. So far from any national incapacity, or obtuse feelings attaching to ourselves in respect to these arts, the noblest efforts had long been made, not only by individuals, but by the magnificence of Henry VIII., who invited to his court Raphael and Titian, but unfortunately only obtained Holbein. A later sovereign, Charles the First, not only possessed galleries of pictures, and was the greatest purchaser in Europe, for he raised their value, but he likewise possessed the taste and the science of the connoisseur. Something, indeed, had occurred to our national genius which had thrown it into a stupifying state, from which it is yet hardly aroused. Could those foreign philosophers have ascended to moral causes, instead of vapouring forth fanciful notions, they might have struck at the true cause of the deficiency in our national genius. The jealousy of puritanic fanaticism had persecuted these arts from the first rise of the Reformation in this country. It had not only banished them from our churches and altar-pieces, but the fury of the people, and the "wisdom" of parliament, had alike combined to mutilate and even efface what little remained of painting and sculpture among us. Even within our own times this deadly hostility to art was not extinct; for when a proposal was made gratuitously to decorate our places of worship by a series of religious pictures, and English artists, in pure devotion to Art, zealous to refute the Continental calumniators, asked only for walls to cover, George the Third highly approved of the plan. The design was put aside, as some had a notion that the cultivation of the fine arts in our naked churches was a return to Catholicism. Had this glorious plan been realized, the golden age of English art might have arisen. Every artist would have invented a subject most congenial to his powers. REYNOLDS would have emulated Raphael in the Virgin and Child in the manger, WEST had fixed on Christ raising the young man from the dead, BARRY had profoundly meditated on the Jews

rejecting Jesus. Thus did an age of genius perish before its birth! It was on the occasion of this frustrated project that BARRY, in the rage of disappointment, immortalised himself by a gratuitous labour of seven years on the walls of the Society of Arts, for which, it is said, the French government under Buonaparte offered ten thousand pounds.

Thus also it has happened, that we have possessed among ourselves great architects, although opportunities for displaying their genius have been rare. This the fate and fortune of two Englishmen attest. Without the Fire of London, we might not have shown the world one of the greatest architects, in Sir CHRISTOPHER WREN; had not a St. Paul's been required by the nation, he would have found no opportunity of displaying the magnificence of his genius, which even then was mutilated, as the original model bears witness to the world. That great occasion served this noble architect to multiply his powers in other public edifices: and it is here worth remarking, that had not Charles II. been seized by apoplexy, the royal residence which was begun at Winchester on a plan of Sir Christopher Wren's, by its magnificence would have raised a Versailles for England.

The fate of INIGO JONES is as remarkable as that of WREN. Whitehall afforded a proof to foreigners, that among a people which, before that edifice appeared, was reproached for their total deficiency of feeling for the pure classical style of architecture, the true taste could nevertheless exist. This celebrated piece of architecture, however, is but a fragment of a grander composition, by which, had not the civil wars intervened, the fame of Britain would have balanced the glory of Greece, or Italy, or France, and would have shown that our country is more deficient in marble than in genius. Thus the fire of London produces a St. Paul's, and the civil wars suppress a Whitehall. Such circumstances in the history of art among nations have not always been developed by those theorists who have calumniated the artists of England.

In the history of genius it is remarkable, that its work is often invented, and lies neglected. A close observer of this age pointed out to me, that the military genius of that great French captain who so long appeared to have conquered Europe, was derived from his applying the new principles of war discovered by FOLARD and GUIBERT. The genius of FOLARD observed, that among the changes of military discipline in the practice of war among European nations since the introduction of gunpowder, one of the ancient methods of the Romans had been improperly neglected, and in his Commentaries on Polybius, Folard revived this forgotten mode of warfare. GUIBERT, in his great work, "Histoire de la Milice Française," or rather the History

of the Art of War, adopted Folard's system of charging by columns, and breaking the centre of the enemy, which seems to be the famous plan of our Rodney and Nelson in their maritime battles. But this favourite plan became the ridicule of the military; and the boldness of his pen, with the high confidence of the author, only excited adversaries to mortify his pretensions, and to treat him as a dreamer. From this perpetual opposition to his plans, and the neglect he incurred, GUIBERT died of "vexation of spirit;" and the last words on the death-bed of this man of genius were, "One day they will know me!" FOLARD and GUIBERT created a BUONAPARTE, who studied them on the field of battle; and he who would trace the military genius who so long held in suspense the fate of the world, may discover all that he performed in the neglected inventions of preceding genius.

Hence also we may deduce the natural gradations of genius. Many men of genius must arise before a particular man of genius can appear. Before HOMER there were other epic poets; a catalogue of their names and their works has come down to us. CORNEILLE could not have been the chief dramatist of France, had not the founders of the French drama preceded him, and POPE could not have preceded DRYDEN. It was in the nature of things that a GIOTTO and a CIMABUE should have preceded a RAPHAEL and a MICHAEL ANGELO.

Even the writings of such extravagant geniuses as BRUNO and CARDAN, gave indications of the progress of the human mind; and had RAMUS not shaken the authority of the *Organon* of Aristotle, we might not have had the *Novum Organon* of BACON. Men slide into their degree in the scale of genius, often by the exercise of a single quality which their predecessors did not possess, or by completing what at first was left imperfect. Truth is a single point in knowledge, as beauty is in art; ages revolve till a NEWTON and a LOCKE accomplish what an ARISTOTLE and a DESCARTES began. The old theory of animal spirits, observes Professor Dugald Stewart, was applied by DESCARTES to explain the mental phenomena, which led NEWTON into that train of thinking which served as the ground-work of HARTLEY'S theory of vibrations. The learning of one man makes others learned, and the influence of genius is in nothing more remarkable than in its effects on its brothers. SELDEN'S treatise on the Syrian and Arabian Deities enabled MILTON to comprise in one hundred and thirty beautiful lines, the two large and learned syntagma which Selden had composed on that abstract subject. LELAND, the father of British antiquities, impelled STOWE to work on his "Survey of London;" and Stowe's "London" inspired CAMDEN'S stupendous "Britannia."

Herodotus produced Thucydides, and Thucydides Xenophon. With us HUME, ROBERTSON and GIBBON, rose almost simultaneously by mutual inspiration. There exists a perpetual action and reaction in the history of the human mind. It has frequently been inquired why certain periods seem to have been more favourable to a particular class of genius than another; or in other words, why men of genius appear in clusters. We have theories respecting barren periods, which are only satisfactorily accounted for by moral causes. Genius generates enthusiasm and rivalry; but having reached the meridian of its class, we find that there can be no progress in the limited perfection of human nature. All excellence in art, if it cannot advance, must decline.

Important discoveries are often obtained by accident; but the single work of a man of genius, which has at length changed the character of a people, and even of an age, is slowly matured in meditation Even the mechanical inventions of genius must first become perfect in its own solitary abode, ere the world can possess them. Men of genius then produce their usefulness in privacy; but it may not be of immediate application, and is often undervalued by their own generation.

The influence of authors is so great, while the author himself is so inconsiderable, that to some the cause may not appear commensurate to its effect. When EPICURUS published his doctrines, men immediately began to express themselves with freedom on the established religion, and the dark and fearful superstitions of paganism, falling into neglect, mouldered away. If, then, before the art of multiplying the productions of the human mind existed, the doctrines of a philosopher in manuscript or by lecture, could diffuse themselves throughout a literary nation, it will baffle the algebraist of metaphysics to calculate the unknown quantities of the propagation of human thought. There are problems in metaphysics, as well as in mathematics, which can never be resolved.

A small portion of mankind appears marked out by nature and by study for the purpose of cultivating their thoughts in peace, and of giving activity to their discoveries, by disclosing them to the people. "Could I," exclaims MONTESQUIEU, whose heart was beating with the feelings of a great author, "could I but afford new reasons to men to love their duties, their king, their country, their laws, that they might become more sensible of their happiness under every government they live, and in every station they occupy, I should deem myself the happiest of men!" Such was the pure aspiration of the great author who studied to preserve, by ameliorating, the humane fabric of society. The same largeness of mind characterises all the eloquent

friends of the human race. In an age of religious intolerance it inspired the President DE THOU to inculcate, from sad experience and a juster view of human nature, the impolicy as well as the inhumanity of religious persecutions, in that dedication to Henry IV. which Lord Mansfield declared he could never read without rapture. "I was not born for myself alone, but for my country and my friends!" exclaimed the genius which hallowed the virtuous pages of his immortal history.

Even our liberal yet dispassionate LOCKE restrained the freedom of his inquiries, and corrected the errors which the highest intellect may fall into, by marking out that impassable boundary which must probably for ever limit all human intelligence; for the maxim which LOCKE constantly inculcates is, that "Reason must be the last judge and guide in everything." A final answer to those who propagate their opinions, whatever they may be with a sectarian spirit, to force the understandings of other men to their own modes of belief, and their own variable opinions. This alike includes those who yield up nothing to the genius of their age to correct the imperfections of society, and those who, opposing all human experience, would annihilate what is most admirable in its institutions.

The public mind is the creation of the Master-Writers; an axiom as demonstrable as any in Euclid, and a principle as sure in its operation as any in mechanics. BACON'S influence over philosophy, and GROTIUS'S over the political state of society, are still felt, and their principles practised far more than in their own age. These men of genius in their solitude, and with their views not always comprehended by their contemporaries, became themselves the founders of our science and our legislation. When LOCKE and MONTESQUIEU appeared, the old systems of government were reviewed; the principle of toleration was developed; and the revolutions of opinion were discovered.

A noble thought of VITRUVIUS, who of all the authors of antiquity seems to have been most deeply imbued with the feelings of the literary character, has often struck me by the grandeur and the truth of its conception. "The sentiments of excellent writers," he says, "although their persons be for ever absent, exist in future ages; and in councils and debates are of greater authority than those of the persons who are present."

But politicians affect to disbelieve that abstract principles possess any considerable influence on the conduct of the subject. They tell us, that "in times of tranquillity they are not wanted, and in times of confusion they are never heard;" this is the philosophy of men who do not choose that philosophy should disturb their fire-side! But it is in leisure, when they are not wanted, that the speculative part of mankind create them, and

when they are wanted they are already prepared for the active multitude, who come like a phalanx, pressing each other with a unity of feeling, and an integrity of force. PALEY would not close his eyes on what was passing before him; for he has observed, that during the convulsions at Geneva, the political theory of ROUSSEAU was prevalent in their contests; while in the political disputes of our country, the ideas of civil authority displayed in the works of LOCKE, recurred in every form. The character of a great author can never be considered as subordinate in society; nor do politicians secretly think so at the moment they are proclaiming it to the world, for on the contrary, they consider the worst actions of men as of far less consequence than the propagation of their opinions. Politicians have exposed their disguised terrors. Books, as well as their authors, have been tried and condemned. Cromwell was alarmed when he saw the Oceana of HARRINGTON, and dreaded the effects of that volume more than the plots of the royalists; while Charles II. trembled at an author only in his manuscript state, and in the height of terror, and to the honour of genius, it was decreed, that "Scribere est agere."—"The book of Telemachus," says Madame de Staël, "was a courageous action." To insist with ardour on the duties of a sovereign, and to paint with such truth a voluptuous reign, disgraced Fenelon at the court of Louis XIV., but the virtuous author raised a statue for himself in all hearts. MASSILLON'S *Petit Carême* was another of these animated recalls of man to the sympathies of his nature, which proves the influence of an author; for during the contests of Louis XV. with the parliaments, large editions of this book were repeatedly printed, and circulated through the kingdom. In such moments it is that a people find and know the value of a great author, whose work is the mighty organ which conveys their voice to their governors.

But if the influence of benevolent authors over society is great, it must not be forgotten that the abuse of this influence is terrific. Authors preside at a tribunal in Europe, which is independent of all the powers of the earth,—the tribunal of Opinion! But since, as Sophocles has long declared, "Opinion is stronger than Truth," it is unquestionable that the falsest and the most depraved notions are, as long as these opinions maintain their force, accepted as immutable truths; and the mistakes of one man become the crimes of a whole people.

Authors stand between the governors and the governed, and form the single organ of both. Those who govern a nation cannot at the same time enlighten the people, for the executive power is not empirical; and the governed cannot think, for they have no continuity of leisure. The great systems of thought,

and the great discoveries in moral and political philosophy, have come from the solitude of contemplative men, seldom occupied in public affairs or in private employments. The commercial world owes to two retired philosophers, LOCKE and SMITH, those principles which dignify trade into a liberal pursuit, and connect it with the happiness and the glory of a people. A work in France, under the title of "L'Ami des Hommes," by the Marquis of MIRABEAU, first spread there a general passion for agricultural pursuits; and although the national ardour carried all to excess in the reveries of the "Economistes," yet marshes were drained and waste lands inclosed. The Emilius of ROUSSEAU, whatever may be its errors and extravagances operated a complete revolution in modern Europe, by communicating a bolder spirit to education, and improving the physical force and character of man. An Italian marquis, whose birth and habits seemed little favourable to study, operated a moral revolution in the administration of the laws. BECCARIA dared to plead in favour of humanity against the prejudices of many centuries, in his small volume on "Crimes and Punishments," and at length abolished torture; while the French advocates drew their principles from that book, rather than from their national code, — our Blackstone quoted it with admiration! LOCKE and VOLTAIRE having written on "Toleration," have long made us tolerant. In all such cases, the authors were themselves entirely unconnected with their subjects, except as speculative writers.

Such are the authors who become universal in public opinion; and it then happens that the work itself meets with the singular fate, which that great genius SMEATON said happened to his stupendous Pharos: "The novelty having yearly worn off, and the greatest real praise of the edifice being that nothing has happened to it, nothing has occurred to keep the talk of it alive." The fundamental principles of such works, after having long entered into our earliest instruction, become unquestionable as self-evident propositions; yet no one, perhaps, at this day, can rightly conceive the great merits of Locke's Treatises on "Education," and on "Toleration;" or the philosophical spirit of Montesquieu, and works of this high order, which first diffused a tone of thinking over Europe. The principles have become so incorporated with our judgment, and so interwoven with our feelings, that we can hardly now imagine the fervour they excited at the time, or the magnanimity of their authors in the decision of their opinions. Every first great monument of genius raises a new standard to our knowledge, from which the human mind takes its impulse and measures its advance-

ment. The march of human thought through ages might be indicated by every great work as it is progressively succeeded by others. It stands like the golden milliary column in the midst of Rome, from which all others reckoned their distances.

But a scene of less grandeur, yet more beautiful, is the view of the solitary author himself in his own study—so deeply occupied, that whatever passes before him never reaches his observation, while, working more than twelve hours every day, he still murmurs as the hour strikes; the volume still lies open, the page still importunes—"And whence all this business?" He has made a discovery for us! that never has there been anything important in the active world, but what is reflected in the literary—books contain everything, even the falsehoods and the crimes which have been only projected by men! This solitary man of genius is arranging the materials of instruction and curiosity from every country and every age; he is striking out, in the concussion of new light, a new order of ideas for his own times; he possesses secrets which men hide from their contemporaries, truths they dared not utter, facts they dared not discover. View him in the stillness of meditation, his eager spirit busied over a copious page, and his eye sparkling with gladness. He has concluded what his countrymen will hereafter cherish as the legacy of genius—you see him now changed; and the restlessness of his soul is thrown into his very gestures—could you listen to the vaticinator! But the next age only will quote his predictions. If he be the truly great author, he will be best comprehended by posterity, for the result of ten years of solitary meditation has often required a whole century to be understood and to be adopted. The ideas of Bishop BERKELEY, in his "Theory of Vision," were condemned as a philosophical romance, and now form an essential part of every treatise of optics; and "the history of Oracles," by FONTENELLE, says La Harpe, which in his youth was censured for its impiety, the centenarian lived to see regarded as a proof of his respect for religion.

"But what influence can this solitary man, this author of genius, have on his nation, when he has none in the very street in which he lives? and it may be suspected as little in his own house, whose inmates are hourly practising on the infantine simplicity which marks his character, and that frequent abstraction from what is passing under his own eyes?"

This solitary man of genius is stamping his own character on the minds of his own people. Take one instance, from others

far more splendid, in the contrast presented by FRANKLIN and Sir WILLIAM JONES. The parsimonious habits, the money-getting precepts, the wary cunning, the little scruple about means, the fixed intent upon the end, of Dr. FRANKLIN, imprinted themselves on his Americans. Loftier feelings could not elevate a man of genius, who became the founder of a trading people, and who retained the early habits of a journeyman; while the elegant tastes of Sir WILLIAM JONES could inspire the servants of a commercial corporation to open new and vast sources of knowledge. A mere company of merchants, influenced by the literary character, enlarges the stores of the imagination, and provides fresh materials for the history of human nature.

FRANKLIN, with that calm good sense which is freed from the passion of imagination, has himself declared this important truth relating to the literary character: "I have always thought that one man of tolerable abilities may work great changes and accomplish great affairs among mankind, if he first forms a good plan; and cutting off all amusements, or other employments that would divert his attention, makes the execution of that same plan his sole study and business." Fontenelle was of the same opinion, for he remarks, that "a single great man is sufficient to accomplish a change in the taste of his age." The life of GRANVILLE SHARP is a striking illustration of the solitary force of individual character.

It cannot be doubted that the great author, in the solitude of his study, has often created an epoch in the annals of mankind. A single man of genius arose in a barbarous period in Italy, who gave birth not only to Italian, but to European literature. Poet, orator, philosopher, geographer, historian, and antiquary, PETRARCH kindled a line of light through his native land, while a crowd of followers hailed their father-genius, who had stamped his character on the age. DESCARTES, it has been observed, accomplished a change in the taste of his age by the perspicacity and method for which he was indepted to his mathematical researches; and "models of metaphysical analysis and logical discussions" in the works of HUME and SMITH have had the same influence in the writings of our own time.

Even genius not of the same colossal size may aspire to add to the progressive mass of human improvement by its own single effort. When an author writes on a national subject, he awakens all the knowledge which slumbers in a nation, and calls around him, as it were, every man of talents; and though his own fame may be eclipsed by his successors, yet the emana-

tion, the morning light, broke from his solitary study. Our naturalist RAY, though no man was more modest in his claims, delighted to tell a friend, that "Since the publication of his catalogue of Cambridge plants, many were prompted to botanical studies, and to herbalise in their walks in the fields." Johnson has observed, that "An emulation of study was raised by CHEKE and SMITH, to which even the present age perhaps owes many advantages, without remembering or knowing its benefactors. ROLLIN is only a compiler of history, and to the antiquary he is nothing! But races yet unborn will be enchanted by that excellent man, in whose works "the heart speaks to the heart," and whom Montesquieu called "The Bee of France." The BACONS, the NEWTONS, and the LEIBNITZES, were insulated by their own creative powers, and stood apart from the world, till the dispersers of knowledge became their interpreters to the people, opening a communication between two spots, which, though close to each other, were long separated—the closet and the world! The ADDISONS, the FONTENELLES, and the FEYJOOS, the first popular authors in their nations, who taught England, France, and Spain, to become a reading people, while their fugitive page imbues with intellectual sweetness every uncultivated mind, like the perfumed mould taken up by the Persian swimmer. "It was but a piece of common earth, but so delicate was its fragrance, that he who found it, in astonishment asked whether it were musk or amber. 'I am nothing but earth; but roses were planted in my soil, and their odorous virtues have deliciously penetrated through all my pores: I have retained the infusion of sweetness, otherwise I had been but a lump of earth!'"

I have said that authors produce their usefulness in privacy, and that their good is not of immediate application, and often unvalued by their own generation. On this occasion the name of EVELYN always occurs to me. This author supplied the public with nearly thirty works, at a time when taste and curiosity were not yet domiciliated in our country; his patriotism warmed beyond the eightieth year of his age, and in his dying hand he held another legacy for his nation. EVELYN conveys a pleasing idea of his own works and their design. He first taught his countrymen how to plant, then to build: and having taught them to be useful *without doors,* he then attempted to divert and occupy them *within doors*, by his treatises on chalcography, painting, medals, libraries. It was during the days of destruction and devastation both of woods and buildings, the civil wars of Charles the First, that a solitary author was projecting to make the nation delight in repairing their evil, by inspiring

them with the love of agriculture and architecture. Whether his enthusiasm has introduced to us a taste for medals and prints, or intent on purifying the city from smoke and nuisances, and sweetening it by plantations of native plants, after having enriched our orchards and our gardens, placed summer-ices on our tables, and varied even the salads of our country; furnishing "a Gardener's Kalendar," which, as Cowley said, was to last as long "as months and years;" whether the philosopher of the Royal Society, or the lighter satirist of the toilet, or the fine moralist for active as well as a contemplative life—in all these changes of a studious life, the better part of his history has not yet been told. While Britain retains her awful situation among the nations of Europe, the "Sylva of EVELYN will endure with her triumphant oaks. In the third edition of that work the heart of the patriot expands at its result; he tells Charles II. "how many millions of timber trees, besides infinite others, have been propagated and planted *at the instigation and by the sole direction of this work.*" It was an author in his studious retreat, who casting a prophetic eye on the age we live in, secured the late victories of our naval sovereignty. Inquire at the Admiralty how the fleets of Nelson have been constructed, and they can tell you that it was with the oaks which the genius of EVELYN planted[1].

The same character existed in France, where DE SERRES, in 1599, composed a work on the cultivation of mulberry trees, in reference to the art of raising silk-worms. He taught his fellow-citizens to convert a leaf into silk, and silk to become the representative of gold. Our author encountered the hostility of the prejudices of his times, even from Sully, in giving his country one of her staple commodities; but I lately received a medal recently struck in honour of DE SERRES by the Agricultural Society of the Department of the Seine. We slowly commemorate the intellectual characters of our own country, and our men of genius are still defrauded of the debt we are daily incurring of their posthumous fame. Let monuments be raised, and let medals be struck! They are sparks of glory which might be scattered through the next age!

There is a singleness and unity in the pursuits of genius which is carried on through all ages, and will for ever connect the nations of the earth. THE IMMORTALITY OF THOUGHT EXISTS

[1] Since this was first printed, the *Diary* of EVELYN has appeared; and although it could not add to his general character, yet I was not too sanguine in my anticipations of the diary of so perfect a literary character, who has shown how his studies were intermingled with the business of life.

FOR MAN! The veracity of HERODOTUS, after more than two thousand years, is now receiving a fresh confirmation. The single and precious idea of genius, however obscure, is eventually disclosed; for original discoveries have often been the developments of former knowledge. The system of the circulation of the blood appears to have been obscurely conjectured by SERVETUS, who wanted experimental facts to support his hypothesis: VESALIUS had an imperfect perception of the right motion of the blood: CÆSALPINUS admits a circulation without comprehending its consequences; at length our HARVEY, by patient meditation and penetrating sagacity, removed the errors of his predecessors, and demonstrated the true system. Thus, too, HARTLEY expanded the hint of "the association of ideas" from LOCKE, and raised a system on what LOCKE had only used for an incidental illustration. The beautiful theory of vision by BERKELEY, was taken up by him just where LOCKE had dropped it; and as Professor Dugald Stewart describes, by following out his principles to their remoter consequences, BERKELEY brought out a doctrine which was as true as it seemed novel. LYDGATE's "fall of Princes," says Mr. Campbell, "probably suggested to Lord SACKVILLE the idea of his 'Mirror for Magistrates.'" The Mirror for Magistrates again gave hints to SPENSER in allegory, and may also "have possibly suggested to SHAKESPEARE the idea of his historical plays." When indeed we find that that great original, HOGARTH, adopted the idea of his "Idle and Industrious Apprentice," from the old comedy of "Eastward Hoe," we easily conceive that some of the most original inventions of genius, whether the more profound or the more agreeable, may thus be tracked in the snow of time.

In the history of genius therefore there is no chronology, for to its votaries everything it has done is PRESENT—the earliest attempt stands connected with the most recent. This continuity of ideas characterises the human mind, and seems to yield an anticipation of its immortal nature.

There is a consanguinity in the characters of men of genius, and a genealogy may be traced among their races. Men of genius in their different classes, living at distinct periods, or in remote countries, seem to reappear under another name; and in this manner there exists in the literary character an eternal transmigration. In the great march of the human intellect the same individual spirit seems still occupying the same place, and is still carrying on, with the same powers, his great work through a line of centuries. It was on this principle that one great poet has recently hailed his brother as "The ARIOSTO of the North," and ARIOSTO as "The SCOTT of the South." And can we

deny the real existence of the genealogy of genius? Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and Newton! this is a single line of descent!

ARISTOTLE, HOBBES, and LOCKE, DESCARTES and NEWTON, approximate more than we imagine. The same chain of intellect which ARISTOTLE holds, through the intervals of time, is held by them; and links will only be added by their successors. The naturalists, PLINY, GESSNER, ALDROVANDUS, and BUFFON, derive differences in their characters, from the spirit of the times; but each only made an accession to the family estate, while he was the legitimate representative of the family of the naturalists. ARISTOPHANES, MOLIERE, and FOOTE, are brothers of the family of national wits: the wit of Aristophanes was a part of the common property, and Molière and Foote were Aristophanic. PLUTARCH, LA MOTHE LE VAYER, and BAYLE, alike busied in amassing the materials of human thought and human action, with the same vigorous and vagrant curiosity, must have had the same habits of life. If Plutarch were credulous, La Mothe le Vayer sceptical, and Bayle philosophical, all that can be said is, that though the heirs of the family may differ in their dispositions, no one will arraign the integrity of the lineal descent. VARRO did for the Romans what PAUSANIAS had done for the Greeks, and MONTFAUCON for the French, and CAMDEN for ourselves.

My learned and reflecting friend, whose original researches have enriched our national history, has this observation on the character of WICKLIFFE:—"To complete our idea of the importance of Wickliffe, it is only necessary to add, that as his writings made John Huss the reformer of Bohemia, so the writings of John Huss led Martin Luther to be the reformer of Germany; so extensive and so incalculable are the consequences which sometimes follow from human actions[1]." Our historian has accompanied this by giving the very feelings of Luther in early life on his first perusal of the works of John Huss: we see the spark of creation caught at the moment: a striking influence of the generation of character! Thus a father-spirit has many sons; and several of the great revolutions in the history of man have been carried on by that secret creation of minds visibly operating on human affairs. In the history of the human mind, he takes an imperfect view, who is confined to contemporary knowledge, as well as he who stops short with the Ancients. Those who do not carry researches through the genealogical lines of genius, mutilate their minds.

[1] Turner's History of England, vol. ii. p. 432.

Such, then, is the influence of AUTHORS!—those "great lights of the world," by whom the torch of genius has been successively seized and perpetually transferred from hand to hand, in the fleeting scene. DESCARTES delivers it to NEWTON, BACON to LOCKE; and the continuity of human affairs, through the rapid generations of man, is maintained from age to age!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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